A PEEP

AT THE

THEATRES!

AND

BIRD'S-EYE VIEWS OF MEN

IN

THE JUBILEE YEAR!

A NOVEL,

Satirical, Critical, and Moral,

IN THREE VOLUMES;

BY AN OLD NAVAL OFFICER.

VOL. II.

" He who runs may read!"

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF YORK,

LONG COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF

HIS MAJESTY'S ARMIES;

WHOSE UNWEARIED AND HAPPY EXERTIONS

HAVING INSPIRED BRITISH LEGIONS

WITH DISCIPLINE AND VALOUR,

SUPERIOR TO ANY TROOPS ON EARTH,

GAINED HIM THE BEST POSSIBLE REWARD;

BEING AGAIN CALLED TO THAT COMMAND BY

THE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE OF

KING AND PEOPLE!

THIS SECOND VOLUME

IS MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

A PEEP

AT THE

THEATRES.

VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

WHO EVER FELT THE HEART THROB WITH ANGUISH AT PARTING WITH A RIVAL!

THOUGH it is equally ridiculous and imprudent, to suffer our waking thoughts to rest on the illusions of our dreams; yet all the exertions of fortitude and good sense, will not prevent our ideas from sometimes recurring to the visions of a

doze; and endeavouring to associate the vagaries of sleep with events that must tend to our happiness or misery. Both Lady Harriett and Miss O'Mara had repeatedly laughed at the absurdity of suffering the mind to dwell on dreams; yet, such was the contrast of their ideas, what they had often censured in their friends, they encouraged in themselves! and actually suffered their strange vagaries to prey so much upon their spirits, that, by the hour of rising—(from having, for the first time, laden their bosoms with uneasy secrets, and their rest having been really disturbed by inauspicious visions,) they were so much indisposed as each to feel it requisite to attribute her languor to *cold*, caught the preceding evening at the play! and to make that a pretext for remaining invisible until they could recover their usual spirits;—which absolutely occasioned a seclusion of two whole days;—

and might have occupied much more of the week, had not the evening of the third day been previously devoted to the Oratorio; and not a doubt existing of their *friends* being there.

Indeed, on the third morning, they had their surmises, whether they should be able to support a conversation with tolerable spirits; when an occurrence took place which added considerably to their little store.

Having determined to enjoy half an hour's walk, on so fine a morning; on entering the park at Grosvenor Gate, they were met by the Marchioness de Piomberti, who had walked from Great George Street, up Constitution Hill, on purpose to pay a morning visit to the ladies. As the fineness of the weather had equal attractions to all, they determined that the

visit, having commenced in Hyde Park, should, also, conclude there; so they sallied away towards Kensington Gardens; and seemed not a little delighted with each others company.

When the lovely party had arrived at the *bridge*, the marchioness stopped; and, placing her hands on the iron-railing, said —"upon my word, this is not so very "high, for a person, tall as I am, to leap "over; and when a woman, already dis-"tracted with pain, and *frightened out* "*of her wits*, by transforming a harmless "*cow* into a *mad bull*, takes it into her "head to make such an *escape* from "danger, there is no very great difficulty "in effecting it. I wonder how deep the "water is in that little place? I wonder, "too, where those *gentlemen* reside? As "I should like, vastly, to call and thank "them for their humane and critical at-

" tention to me, when in such a dreadful " situation! I shall be sorry to quit the " kingdom without taking leave of them. " But when you, ladies, happen to see " them, I will be much obliged to you to " make my respectful thanks; and assure " them, that, when in Sicily, so often as " I hear of any person being preserved " from drowning, I will put up a prayer " to the *Almighty* for blessings on my " preservers!"

The ladies readily promised the marchioness to execute her commands most punctually, the first time they saw the gentlemen; but made no donbt, that she herself, would *often* meet them in her parties before she left England; as she would not be going very soon, *they hoped.*

" I go to-morrow, ladies," said the

marchioness, with a sigh.—" I had hoped " to have spent some happy hours with " you before I went away, but an express " from Palermo renders the immediate " return of my family indispensibly ne- " cessary; and, whether I may ever " come to England again, is very uncer- " tain."

Though our two lovely *Inseparables* began to feel evident tokens of esteem for the amiable marchioness, they could not feel very sorry that she was on the eve of quitting the kingdom, as so fine a figure must have claimed the warm attentions of any gentleman; especially those who had rendered her such essential service; and who would, naturally, be pleased at receiving her grateful and reiterated acknowledgements, whenever they met. Therefore, though her company became desirable, her absence would relieve them

from *little anxieties* which they could not fail to experience if she were present. Consequently, having roamed about for more than two hours; and, more than once, anticipated the pleasures of a future meeting, when there would be no danger, *as to little impediments*, the ladies saw the marchioness into a hackney-coach at the Piccadilly Gate; and took their leaves with far less regret than they would otherwise have done.—Such, O Love! are the little lurking symptoms of jealousy, even in bosoms inconscious of the actual presence of the tender passion! All other passions claim apology if evincing disengenuous traits; but thou canst instantly qualify us for ungenerous deeds, and teach us even to make a merit of such actions!

What, but the jaundiced impulse of the *tender* passion, could have induced Lady

Harriett to observe—"The poor mar-
"chioness seemed to me, Eliza, to express
"a kind of disappointment, at not know-
"ing where to find our *theatrical friends.*
"Perhaps the gentlemen are not partial
"to Italian beauties, when so many Eng-
"lish faces are constantly meeting their
"eyes!"—And what, but such an impulse, could have urged the following reply from Eliza?

"She has, really, a very showy figure,
"my dear Lady Harriett, but, I must
"confess, I see nothing in the contour of
"Italian countenances, which, if I were
"a *man*, would seize on *my* affections;
"or which could give me much inquie-
"tude, although a *woman!*" And yet, setting aside those selfish symptoms, peculiar to what we call love, our lovely females harboured not a single idea,

which, if known to all the world, need to have tinged their cheeks with the slightest suffusion.

As it was much later than the ladies had expected, they were under the necessity of dressing for dinner with all possible haste. Yet, on coming down stairs, they found that the earl and Sir William had been waiting some minutes; to the great pleasure of the baronet, who began to rally the ladies on their long walk; and was very pressing to know what *show-box* had so long detained them?

Being informed by Lady Harriett of the meeting with the Marchioness de Piombert; also of their long walk, and of their probable parting for so loug a period—

"Indeed!" cried Sir William—"I am "sorry for that, my lady; as the mar-

"chioness is a very amiable character, "and possesses a most refined under- "standing."

Encomiums so very warm, from a gentleman, too, whom she thought a stranger to the marchioness, made her ladyship gaze around her; and she could not refrain from saying—"I thought you "were wholly unacquainted with the lady, "Sir William."

"So I was, until the evening before yes- "terday; when I saw her at the Countess "of Cornwall's card-party. We then had "some conversation; and I really was "much entertained with her vivacity, and "the brilliancy of her repartees."

The ladies looked at each other. Sir William had touched a similar cord in each; and each felt a gleam of satisfac-

tion at the certainty of the marchioness quitting the kingdom so hastily; for, if her company, on one visit only, could have such a visible effect on so absent a man as Sir William Vacant generally was, what might not have been her influence on the minds of such brilliantly accomplished gentlemen as their *two* theatrical friends!

CHAPTER II.

FAR-FETCHED AND DEAR-BOUGHT, IS PECULIAR TO THE TASTE OF THE LADIES, THEY SAY: BUT WHY MAY NOT JOHN BULL ADOPT THE SAME IDEA IN THESE WHIMSICAL TIMES?

As the second movement of the overture was playing when our party arrived, they had but a few minutes to spare after taking their seats, before the Oratorio commenced; but, in those few minutes, the ladies could plainly perceive, that all the places in their box were already occupied; except two, which were kept by a footman in a very smart livery. Of

course they despaired of having their *friends* near enough to converse with on that evening; unless they should happen to enter an adjoining box, in both of which, at that time, their happened to be sufficient room. On such occurrence they placed some reliance; when, their favourite piece commencing, they paid more than common attention to it; and, in many instances, were highly gratified by so doing.

Immediately after the conclusion of the act, the ladies instinctively cast their eyes towards each of the adjoining boxes; though without the hoped success: but, before they had time to notice their disappointment to each other, they were asked by their friends (who had occupied the places kept by the servant in the smart livery, while the chorus—*For unto us a child is born*—was performing) how

they liked such mode of executing the divinest work of the immortal Handel?

"Most *divinely*, of course; or we "should be deemed unfashionable," said Lady Harriett, highly pleased at the question so unexpected.

"Were you not *ravished*, madam, with "the melodious tones of the two principal "airs?" said *Juba*, addressing Miss O'Mara from behind her ladyship.

"Melodious tones generally have a "very forcible effect on me, Sir," replied the lady—"but I cannot say that I have "experienced any very violent impres-"sions yet."

"What, Madam!" exclaimed *Cato*, with affected surprise—"were you not "thunder-struck! delighted!"

"If you allude to the *airs Italianized,* "Sir," answered Eliza—"I cannot say "that I was actually delighted; for, to "be delighted, I apprehend, we must be "very highly pleased: but I cannot feel "highly pleased while I hear *Handel's* "divine music mutilated, by singing the "sacred words of Scripture unintelligibly! "Because, if it be not necessary to know "what is singing, there is, in my humble "opinion, no necessity for singing at all; "as the exquisite tones of an excellent "band, must be far more harmonious. "But, as to being thunder-struck—there, "Sir, I will readily confess I felt that "effect fully. I was, indeed, thunder-"struck at hearing a lady, evidently very "highly skilled in the science of music, "while running passages with most aston-"ishing rapidity, so ridicule to the taste "of an English audience, as to compel "them to be *ravished,* by barking loud

"as a *mastiff!* which mode, in the "modern vocabulary of music, may be "termed—*Crescendo fortissimo presto.* "For my own part, I think it somewhat "like deciding a wager—as to who can "*give most,* or who can *bear most.*"

"Hey dey, Madam! Is this the way "you pay your adoration to *John Bull's* "*darling?*" said *Cato,* in his satirical way. "Take care, Madam! it would "be no trivial misfortune to a modern "young lady, to be accused of having "lost her *taste!*"

"That would be rather cruel, indeed, "Sir," said Eliza, smiling a little sarcastically—"especially as I am always "cautiously anxious to *taste* for myself, "and not rely on the *puffs* and *para-* "*graphs* of *partial friends, interested* "*hirelings,* or *infatuated admirers.* If

"I happen to adore the divine sestenutive
" harmony of *Handel's Messiah*, and wish
" ever to hear it sung in its purity, am I
" to be accused of want of *taste*, because
" I am not ravished and entranced on
" hearing a person attempt those songs,
" whose chief excellence is in astonishing
" rapidity, and distinct articulation, while
" running long and difficult passages—
" none of which are to be found in it!
" and, therefore, so sung, merely for the
" sake of convincing *John Bull* how capi-
" tally that immortal composer's *divine*
" *sestenutos* might be converted into *Ita-*
" *lian bravuras!* Where, like the trans-
" lation of a *bon mot*, the *expression* is
" tortured, the *point* blunted, and the
" *spirit* lost!"

"But surely, Madam," said *Juba*—
" you will make a little allowance for
" singers deviating, in some degree, from

"the strict rule of chaste performance, by "yielding to the all-commanding influence "of *fashion*?"

"To violate Nature, Sir," returned the lady—"must rather be a *rage* than a "*fashion*. Fashion ever has Nature for "its basis; in fact, its object is to render "the beauties of Nature still more beau- "tiful. But, if we search into the cause "of incessant *bravuras*, we shall perceive "it founded on a desire to conceal some "*deficiency* or *deformity*. So, if a gen- "tleman, having a *nasal twang* in his "voice, when sustaining a long note, be "determined to excel in his profession, "he must, *per force*, in long sustaining "passages, encourage loud *aspirations*, "or introduce *bravura*: and this obser- "vation we shall constantly find exem- "plified, if we will but take the trouble "to judge for ourselves. Nor is it less

" evident in the lady, whose voice, in
" the higher tones, I grant, is clear,
" harmonious, and so strong, as, some-
" times, to be irksome; but, when sus-
" taining notes at, and below, the middle
" of it, or singing recitative *un-accompa-*
" *nied*, appears to me to posses a *fat*,
" *hollow*, *husky* affection; and reminds
" me of an incomparable performer play-
" ing on an indifferent instrument.—This
" may do very well in so immense a
" theatre as the Opera House, where *noise*
" and *rapidity of execution* seem to be all
" which are requisite: but here, a per-
" former, not quite so super-brilliant, and
" a little better instrument, would be more
" suitably adapted to the music of *Handel's*
" *Messiah*.—*Madame Collini's* voice (as
" an Italian) would have been far prefer-
" able in the oratorio, as her upper notes,
" though not very high, are clear and
" melodious; and the lower part of her

" voice possesses many of the sweet and " impressive tones of *Madame Grassini.* " Not that I blame persons for adopting " such modes to conceal defects, when a " chance of securing a fortune is at stake; " but I cannot compliment *John Bull* on " his discernment, in wilfully closing his " eyes and his ears on such imperfections, " and madly extolling the *mask* that hides " a deformed countenance."—The audience becoming clamorous for the second act, the performers entered; and our party became all attention.

" Pray which air does your ladyship " think the sweetest in the act just completed?" said *Juba*, evidently addressing himself to Lady Harriett, immediately after the second act was closed.

" Why, I really think—*He was de-*

" *spised*—is the sweetest *air* in this act: " and I do think, that *Mrs. Bland* sings it " just as Handel, if now alive, would wish " to hear it sung."

" And, wonderful to relate, Madam!" said *Cato*—" if we look round our thea- " tres, we cannot find one vocal per- " former to succeed her in it, who would " not so *bedeck* and *bedizen* the *sweet* " *rustic maid*, that we should be at a loss " to distinguish *her* from *an opera figu-* " *rante.*—In that respect, I presume, " Madam, (addressing himself to Eliza,) " I shall be honoured with your concur- " rence."

" Why, really, Sir, such trickery in " music is disgusting at any time, but " particularly so in the oratorio before us. " Indeed, such is my conviction of vocal " chastity being peculiarly essential to

" this sacred piece, that I would not con-
" sent even to the introduction of Mrs.
" Billington's *Sweet Bird*—from Milton's
" *L'Allegro il Pensoroso*—which, I esti-
" mate as, the highest vocal treat to be
" enjoyed in Europe.—And, now I am
" in the habit of censuring, Sir, I will
" venture to say, that I hardly think that
" lady justifiable in depriving the world
" of her vocal exertions at so early a
" period of her life; especially as no
" material alterations had occurred in her
" family concerns which could require it.
" In my humble opinion, she should have
" recollected, that she was not only a
" *favourite servant*, but an *enchanting*
" *idol*; and, that withdrawing herself,
" while her charming powers were still
" at their meridian altitude, was bearing
" very hard on the public; at the same
" time that it was actually inflicting a
" heavy drawback on the innocent and

"most delightful recreations of her friends, "when their generosity and unbounded "applause, most certainly, merited a few "years further indulgence. But if Mrs. "Billington chose to decline longer to "charm us with her fascinating tones, "were we compelled to have *Handel's* "sacred work literally murdered? I al- "ways understood that the managers of "the *oratorios* were enthusiastic admirers "of *Handel's* music, as well as excellent "musicians. Can it then be possible that "they would have paid so sinister a com- "pliment to his memory as tacitly to have "acknowledged that his divine *Messiah* "would not bring a house (and no other "theatre open!) without a *foreigner* "being stuck up in the *orchestra* whom "*John Bull* cannot understand; unless a "depravity of taste had pervaded more "classes than one. In fact, need we have "greater proofs of want of taste, even in

"our first audiences, than seeing the re-
"peated benefits of a person, who happens
"to be the *rage*, crammed almost to suf-
"focation—because she is the *rage!*—
"while one of the most classical, chaste,
"elegant, and impressive, performer's, in
"serious opera, now existing—for such I
"aver *Signior Tramezzani* to be—was
"suffered to perform to almost empty
"benches; merely because the *tag* was
"not there—to pull an audience into the
"house—hoodwinked! Could not *Mrs.*
"*Dickons*—where was *Mrs. Mountain*—
"*Mrs. Bianchi?* Could not the solemn
"airs of our inspired prophets—set to
"music by the immortal *Handel*, pur-
"posely for *British ears*, please us, if
"sung by such charming interesting *Bri-*
"*tish ladies*—but that we must be com-
"pelled to listen, in agony, to one who
"cannot feel herself comfortable while so
"employed, from the consciousness of

" her own imperfections in the British " language!"—The third act commencing, put a stop to the young lady's serious strictures on the corrupt practice of *Italianizing our English oratorios*—and they became attentive.

During the performance of an old solo, by a performer of no great eminence, the audience indulged so freely in the audible whisper, that Eliza, urged to gain some musical intelligence, turned to *Cato*, and said—" By the servile imitation of the " inferior singers, I should apprehend, " Sir, that the present *rage* might, with " some degree of propriety, be termed a " school."

" Your observation is very just, Madam, " it certainly may," answered *Cato*—" and " indeed, since I have been in the habit

" of frequenting theatres, I have experi-
" enced several vocal *eras*, or *schools*.
" The first which I remember, was the
" good old plain and impressive school;
" when *Beard*, *Mattocks*, *Bannister*,
" *Webster*, *Miss Brent*, *Miss Catley*,
" *Mrs. Baddely*, *Miss Wright*, *Miss*
" *Jameson*, and *Mrs. Weischel*, charmed
" us with their clear, unadulterated, and
" melodious, strains.—After that, came
" the little *he—he—hem—ing* school;
" when the husk of every *bar* seemed to
" require the effort of a *he—he—hem* to
" clear the way to excellence.—Then fol-
" lowed the broader, louder, and more
" Anglified *ha—um!—ha-um-ing* school;
" where the sonorous *ha-um* was found
" equally necessary to *sweep* the way to
" celebrity.—That was suceeeded by the
" present *demi-semi bawling* and *belching*
" school. And, as *outre rages* are so
" much the *ton*, I should not wonder

" if this were soon superseded by a *squal-" *ling* and *snuffling* school; when the " ladies will be taught to *squeak* like an " unfortunate *pig* entangled in a gate; " and the gentlemen to *bray* like a dis- " consolate *Donkey* confined in a pound. " Happily for us, however, Madam, we " have two or three principal singers in " our theatres, who despising the *extra-* " *vaganza* of the present school, dare to " deviate into harmony; and then most " charm us when least they imitate.— " Indeed, for such performers as *Mr.* " *Philips*, *Mrs. Dickens*, and *Mrs. Moun-* " *tain*, (the first in point of excellence " now on the English opera) it would be a " profanation of their abilities, to think " of imitating, where they can excel. " Nor can I omit so favourable an oppor- " tunity of saying, that there is nothing " more dangerous to the fame, nor more " derogatory to the understandings, of

"of theatrical performers, than a servile "imitation of any *one*, however eminent. "As, if they happen to succeed in copying "excellencies, the applause is principally "due to the original—then called to public "recollection; but, if they exhibit blem-"ishes, the ridicule will generally be "deemed all their own!—Even a *Kemble* "and a *Tramezzani* should be rather "*studied* than *copied* by the tragedian "and opera-singer."—Here the *solo* concluding, *Cato* concluded his stricture; and all again became attentive to the orchestra.

While the ladies were quitting the box, at the conclusion of the oratoria, and just as Eliza had caught a respectful bow from *Juba*, Lady Harriett was asked by *Cato*, if they were to be *village maids* or *celestial goddesses* at the Duchess of Centlivres masquerade; which was announced,

in no common strains of managerial eloquence, for the following Friday.

"We are not acquainted, Sir, of course "have uot received tickets"—was the reply: and our little party wishing good evening, returned to Grosvenor Square.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN CURIOSITY IS EXCITED, HOW MANY RESOURCES IT WILL FIND TO AID ITS GRATIFICATION!

How many ladies names have we upon record, in our books of memory, who irritated themselves into a state of actual indisposition, at the bare knowledge of Countesses and Marchionesses, giving *cards, balls,* or *routs,* to which they were not invited! But what are *cards, balls,* or *routs,* to a splendid *masquerade!*—That splendid masquerade given by a *duchess,* too!—'Tis horrible!—It strikes

through the throbbing bosom of a beauteous female, like an *icecle!* And still to heighten the climax of aggravation, was the not receiving tickets for such a masquerade, when, by the very question, as put by *Cato*, their *two* friends, must have tickets for themselves; and would, to a certainty, be there!—O, 'twas horrible, indeed!

"Who knows the Duchess of Cent-"livre?" said Eliza; while putting the wing of a chicken on Lord Hankering's plate, and looking very interestingly at him.

"She is a dashing *dame*," said the earl —"but I am not intimate there."

"I protest," cried Lady Harriett, "I "would give five hundred guineas to be "intimate!"

"Done! Done, my lady!" hollowed Sir William—"I'll take your ladyship the "*club* odds, *five* hundred to *three*, that "the Duke of G——'s *Atalanta* don't win "the match!"

"*Atalanta*, Sir William!—What's "*Atalanta* to me? Unless, indeed, she "would gallop hither with tickets for the "Duchess of Centlivre's masquerade."—And her ladyship gave an inquisitive smile—as much as to say—Can you get tickets for us?

"Exceedingly sorry, my lady; but "haven't made by *bow* to her grace since "the beginning of last winter."

"How so, Sir William?" said Eliza, "I thought you always kept well with the "ladies."

"One of my unfortunate blunders, Miss! "Indeed my lord said that I carried the "cursed unlucky affair rather too far."

Lady Harriett, laughing, said—"I dare "aver, Sir William, that you uttered "some good thing to her grace; and she, "not happening to have a suitable repartee "ready for your confusion, chose to turn "upon her heel, in high dudgeon, at the "absence of her own wit. Pray let us "have it:—it may give us some insight "into the character of so great a lady."

"Hey! Well, I'll try what I can do, "my lady. We were going—we were "walking—we were standing by the side "—we—Upon my honour, I don't recol- "lect a tittle of the matter!—Do, my "lord, tell the ladies: you may remem- "ber the whole."

"Aye, do, my lord," said Eliza—"every anecdote of Sir William Vacant "must yield us infinite satisfaction."

Sir William *bowed* gratefully to Miss O'Mara—then looked at Lady Harriett: to whom, receiving a kind of coroborating smile, he bowed again: and then bowing to the earl, said—"We are all attention, "my lord."

"Hum! Let me see! I know it was a "most confoundedly awkward piece of "business.—That I take upon me to as-"sure you, ladies.—But to the blunder. "We were sauntering along, by the side "of the Serpentine, on the first public "scating day last winter, when we joined "the Duchess of Centlivre, the Marchio-"ness of Moonshine, the Countess of "Carnival, and several others of the "*haut ton.* We sometimes criticised the

"performances of the principal scaters; "and, sometimes, moved along, to keep our- "selves warm. The conversation having "taking a serious turn—to a *sprained-* "*ankle*, which the Honourable Miss "Mackarel (a near relation of the duchess) "had got the preceding day, by the car- "riage breaking down—in reply to some- "body who had spoken on the subject, "her grace heaved a sigh, most sympa- "thetic! and said—'Poor Fatima! it "was a sad breaking-down for her, I am "sure; and must have been a dreadful "surprise.'—'O no, no! None at all, your "grace!—None at all!" cried Sir Wil- "liam, who must have caught the words "*Fatima—breaking-down*—and *surprise*. "—'It was no surprise to me at all. I "saw very plainly that she was *gummy* "*about the heels*; and knew, that, if "*worked hard*, she must *break down*.— "Down she is, too—as very a *rep* as ever

"got a *tumble!* And many a heavy pocket
"fell with her, to my certain knowledge;
"as I had many *valuable reasons* to re-
"member."

"Had her grace known Sir William
"well enough to have recollected some of
"his little absences," continued his lord-
ship—"the speech might have gone off
"with a laugh. But, I rather conceive,
"she received it as a kind of *Bond Street*
"*lingo*; and gave it credit for *more than*
"*met the ear*, from the *oddity* of the ex-
"pressions: for, it was apparent, she set it
"down as a sharp allusion to her relation,
"if not an affront to the whole family.
"I soon convinced Sir William of the
"*faux paux* he had been guilty of, and
"we made several attempts at atonement
"before we left the park; but the duchess
"would never give us an opportunity of
"speaking fairly on the unfortunate sub-

"ject again: and, ever since, if we hap-
"pen to meet her, she is sure to be oc-
"cupied by intensely gazing at some dis-
"tant object."

"Positively, Sir William, the *faux*
"*paux* was of such magnitude as to merit
"*Coventry* for a century! Therefore you
"cannot accuse the duchess of injustice
"for excommunicating you from her good
"graces."—And her ladyship laughed very
heartily.

"Aye, my lady, I am an unfortunate
"blunderer, indeed! When my *brains*
"gad about *gathering of wool*, as the old
"nurses call absence of mind, few men
"can catch a stray *turret*, or *tower*, of
"one *castle in the air*, and attach it to
"*another*, with greater facility than my-
"self; though, by so doing, I generally
"spoil the uniformity of the whole! But,

"whatever blunders I may commit in
"your presence, I have that here (placing
"his hand on his breast) which amply
"convinces me they can never be meant
"to offend; and teaches me to hope, you
"will amiably execute justice with mercy,
"and pardon the *criminal*, though you
"may censure the *crime*."

As this was a step towards the heart, which Sir William was not in the habit of frequently making, its force was sufficiently impressive to cause a slight suffusion; and, being of a turn somewhat too serious to encourage further conversation, the party soon broke up, and the gentlemen went home.

"Upon my word! I think Sir William
"improves very rapidly, my lady," said Eliza, as soon as the gentlemen were gone.
"So gallant a flight as that which we just

"now heard, is not to be met with every
"day; nor from every *beau*, I should
"imagine."

"True, my dear Eliza.—The man
"possesses a tolerable understanding; and
"has, no doubt, some good qualities—
"but his dreadful knack at blundering
"must be a serious drawback on his wife's
"felicity; unless she should happen to pos-
"sess the happy art of turning his awk-
"ward mistakes into sources of laughter,
"fo the entertainment of his friends who
"may be present."

"And which your ladyship's strong
"conception, and smiling kind of satire,
"seem so peculiarly adapted to effect;
"without rendering him uneasy by expo-
"sure, or irritable by finding the laugh
"against him."

"How vexatious it is, that neither my
"brother, nor my lover, can do any
"thing for us relative to this masquerade!
"I wish you, my dear, had a magnani-
"mous swain, that could attack some of
"the *giants* that guard her grace's *Hespe-*
"*rian fruit*, and bring us four of her
"tickets. I never was at one of these
"superb masquerades; nor you, of course.
"How can we contrive to overcome this
"difficulty. I, positively, would not
"stick at a trifle to obtain them!"

"Money, they say, my lady, is a re-
"medy for the cure of all worldly wants.
"Suppose we advertise, in Monday's
"papers, for *four* tickets? With a *Nota*
"*Bene*, in large characters, that—the
"price will be no very material object."

Such a proposal was too favourable to the inclination of both ladies not to be in-

stantly approved. So it was mutually agreed to dispatch servants on the morrow with advertisements, before they should sit down to dinner—although *to-morrow* would be Sunday! Indeed, the hearts, as well as the inclinations, of the ladies, were so materially interested in the masquerade, that they could think of nothing else. They did not doubt but their *two friends* would be there; and, as such entertainments afforded many convenient opportunities for gentlemen *speaking*—and ladies *hearing*, more than, with prudence, would be suffered in any other place, they would have been miserable but for such a prospect of succeeding in procuring tickets. Not that Lady Harriet felt so very much interested in the *hearing* part of the business (though full enough) as was evident from the impression which Sir William's apologetic speech apparently made, to the observation of all present. But she

took it into her head to fancy much more than she really felt.

With respect to Eliza, there was no *fancy* in the case; as, with her, all was genuine anxiety. She had conceived an opinion, that the cause of *Juba* placing himself, so very assiduously, behind Lady Harriett, was purely that he might look at *her* with the greater facility: and she was confident, that, when he bowed to her, as they were leaving the theatre, she saw his lips *move*, as if actually whispering somewhat to her! Where, then, could he find so favourable an opportunity of speaking *his mind* as at the masquerade? With such ideas, and such a prospect of success, our lovely *Inseparables* retired to their pillows; there to indulge in halcyon dreams of *purchased tickets* and *pleasing speeches!*

CHAPTER IV.

HE WHO ATTEMPTS TO WOO A FEMALE OF UNDERSTANDING, MAY NOT ALWAYS FIND MONEY THE GRAND PREPONDERATIVE.

IT was not without much trouble, and an additional shilling to the compositors at each office, that the advertisements could be received on a Sunday evening. However, by dint of intreaty, and a *drop*, the servant succeeded at last; and *five* different papers were ordered for the following morning; that the ladies might, themselves, enjoy the satisfaction of perusing their own compositions—and, the first of the kind, too!

Monday evening came—Tuesday morning—and Tuesday afternoon; during which the hearts of our ladies had fluttered at every rap on the door and ring of the bell, in hope of the precious intelligence that the required number of tickets were ready for their accommodation. But, all in vain were their attentions; and despair actually began to make rapid approaches, when, about eight o'clock, just after the party *quarre* had taken their tea, a servant entered, to announce a gentleman in the front parlour, who begged to be permitted to speak to her ladyship; and *would not detain her five minutes.*

" News of the tickets, for a hundred!" cried her ladyship, hastening after the servant. " I wont take the bet, my lady," bawled Sir William—" because I don't " think it fair. As I am well informed, " that money cannot purchase any, unless " forged."

As her ladyship had left the room before Sir William could conclude his sentence, he was replied to by Eliza; who, calling him one of *Job's comforters*, hinted that it might not be amiss to put Lady Harriett on her guard, as to the forging part of the business. However, she was soon eased of her anxiety on that head, by her ladyship's return; with a kind of half-smile, which could scarcely encourage hope.

"Dear! Dear!" cried she, entering the room—"This is all mere nonsense! "Not a syllable about the tickets, I protest!—Only an old fat *citizen*, come to "court Eliza for his son! and chose to "commence his operations, by humbly "supplicating my powerful aid."

"Come to court me!—What in the "world could bring him on such an errand!" cried Eliza.

Sir William, who had observed Eliza's countenance while she was speaking, said —" I'll bet *five hundred* that the old gen- " tleman draws a *blank!*"

" At all events, as the gentleman seems " very serious on the subject, I really " think, my dear, you should hear what " he has to communicate."

" He can have nothing to communicate " to me, Lady Harriett," said Eliza, look- ing very seriously, " which I would not " wish my friends, now present, to hear " as well as myself. I cannot go to him; " therefore, with your permission, sup- " pose he be introduced here!"

Lady Harriett was silent.—Sir William looked as if he was going to be absent.— My lord, at length, said—" Why, I " really see nothing improper in that,

"Miss O'Mara. We shall not only keep "you in countenance, but be your pro- "tector also."—In fact, an idea had crossed the earl's imagination, that, by putting in a word in favour of the gentleman, he might increase his parliamentary influence in the city.

"Well! suppose I introduce him then?" said her ladyship.

"If your ladyship pleases," returned Eliza; looking a little awkward on such an occasion.

"Then, as this is wholly a family af- "fair; and a business of some delicacy, "too, Miss O'Mara; that I may not "commit some ugly blunder, I will shew "myself, for an hour, at the Lyceum."— And Sir William followed her ladyship.

In two minutes Lady Harriett returned, and introduced the old citizen, Alderman Cinnamon, first to the Earl of Hankering—then to Eliza; saying—"This, Sir, "is my lovely friend, Miss Eliza O'Mara, "the admiration of many more than your "son, if I have any judgement in the "language of the *eyes*."

"Adad! my lady," said the old gentleman, sitting down—"my son has a taste, "I see, and knows how to cull the best of "the *fruit*, if he doesn't know how to "make the best of the *market*. I sup- "pose, Miss *Mary*, *as how* her ladyship "has informed you about the nature of "*this here* visit of mine. My *Jack* has "taken a fancy to you, by seeing you at "the play t'other night, and hearing you "*cut up* all the *play-actors*. That's all "*fair*, Miss, I'll venture to say; because "I know *what's what*. If so be *as how*

" people pay their money to go to *them*
" *there* plays, *they have a right to say*
" *and do whatsoever they please*, in spite
" of all the *Jack Kemble's* in the world;
" and I'll maintain it—because our *even-*
" *ing paper* says so! For, *do you see*,
" Miss *Mary*, *them there play-houses* be
" quite other guess things than the private
" houses, such as we citizens build. As
" 'tis very well known that we can't build
" houses without a smart stock of *Master*
" *Hayes's commodity*; but, when *they*
" *go for to* build play-houses, why, then
" the case is altered, Miss, and pretty
" much too:—for then, you know, they
" can build—they can pay—they can get
" —that is, they can set people to work—
" they can pay them without—no, no,
" not without—but every body knows that
" they can—that they can get the place
" built well enough. And so, having ex-
" plained *that there kind* of business

"pretty plainly, Miss *Mary*, we'll come
"to the point between us at once, if you
"please: and, as *Jack* desired me to say,
"by way of *flourish*, just before we parted
"—Why, I'll lay my *son's heart* at your
"feet."—And, happy that he had explained *that there kind of business* so much to the *comprehension* of Miss O'Mara; and got rid of his son's heart in so fine a style; he turned his back on that lady's chair, and addressed himself to the earl—

"I *knowed* your father, my lord, long
"before he was worth a *plumb*; and I
"always said *as how* he'd prove a thriving
"fellow, as soon as ever I *seed* his old
"master put him into the firm, and give
"him his daughter. As you are a kind
"of guardian over *this here* lady's little
"*modicum*, I may as well tell you what
"I mean to give my son, at once; that

"the bargain may be struck, and the "parties coupled out of hand; for, though "the money-part of the affair, on t'other "side, be none of the best; why, when "I have said I'll do a thing, I will do't, "in spite of *Old Nick!*—I always stand "as staunch to the mark as the *trees* "that I've been dealing in all my life long. "And as for you, my lady"—

Eliza, who, from such a commencement, had not a doubt but the *son* was some wealthy *booby*, full as amiable as his *father*; and looked upon himself as irresistable, merely because affluent, was determined to put an end to such courtship at the first visit; therefore interrupted the eloquent alderman from again displaying the origin of the Loveplumb family to her ladyship, by thanking him for his candid and liberal proposals; and his *son* for his favourable opinion of her:

but, convinced that she was happy in her present situation, and doubting of being so happy, should she precipitately alter it, she begged leave to decline the proffered engagement, however flattering it might appear.—In fact, a certain little *tell-tale* strongly hinted somewhat about an engagement far more flattering.

"Decline! Decline! Decline what, "Miss *Mary*? Why, you don't mean to "say you wont have my son, who will "make a good husband, and be worth "more than a *plumb* when I die! When, "to my certain knowledge, you *ben't* "worth more than a paltry, pitiful, *ten* "*thousand* in all the whole world! "Zounds! Miss *Mary!* it would be worth "*your* while to strike the bargain, if it "was only to make yourself independent." And the old alderman gaped for breath, while recollecting what he should say next;

but was soon prevented from proceeding immediately, by Eliza resolving to punish the old *Cresus* for his coarse, vulgar, and indelicate, abruptness.

"If I judge rightly, Sir," said she, "and I am not apt to be precipitate on "solemn occasions, I can never be more "independent than at present. For, now, "I am really so."

"What! Really independent!—with "that *fiz-gig* of a fortune, of only ten "thousand pounds!—A mere *flea-bite!* "Why, we have got *chandler-shop-girls*, "in the city, that *be* worth half as much "more, I can tell you, Miss *Mary*."

"I am happy to assure you, Sir, that "the *force* of your *compliment* is lost "upon me," returned Eliza, a little warmed. "My ideas of independence

"and your's seem widely different. I, "for my part, think *ten thousand pounds* "in the *British Funds*, a certain inde-"pendence for any female. With the "interest of that, Sir, she may procure "genteel apartments, and all the com-"forts of life. And, while she is deter-"mined not to exceed her income, she is "as independent as any person living."

"Had you not better consent to take "the subject into further consideration, "Miss O'Mara?" said the earl; already despairing of a successful termination of the embassy; so resolving to make interest while there was a chance of speaking.

"Thank you, my lord—thank you.— "Do as much for you at any time. "Zounds! this *here* young wo——, lady "a mean; I beg your pardon, Miss *Mary*,

" but you *bother* me out of all my plans, " with your *farthing rush-light* inde- " pendence, and such stuff! And seem to " think no more of a wealthy citizen, " with a *plumb* or *two*, than of some " paltry country squire worth but *five* " *hundred a year!*

Eliza looked at the earl, and then at Lady Harriett, who really longed for an opportunity to put an end to so gross a scene;—then forcing a smile, with some difficulty, she returned—" I do not doubt, " Sir, but we have many amiable and " honest citizens, as well as country " squires; but, you will pardon me, Sir, " if I do not believe every citizen wealthy " who boasts of his riches. We have, of " late years, seen so many city-gentlemen, " who, on one day, were deemed worth " a whole *paper of plumbs*, and, the next, " hurried out of existence by the horrors

"of an embarrassment!—that, at all "events, it would become a prudent *fe-* "*male* to be as cautious in making pecu- "niary inquiries as you seem to have "been."

"Inquiries! Inquiries about me!— "D—me, Miss, if any man shall doubt "what I say a second time! I've thrown "more time away already, about the *pal-* "*try matter*, than half the women in all "*this here* town be worth. So I beg "your pardon, my lord, for troubling "you; and I beg your ladyship's par- "don for troubling you, also. Yes, "Miss *Mary*; and I beg your——but I "shan't *bother* myself any more about "such a *wee-gee* business.—And so—and "so I wish you all a good night!"—And away grumbled Alderman Cinnamon!

"The old fellow is rough and unplea-

"sant, to be sure," said his lordship—
"but, I will be bound for him, he is
"a warm one!"

"A warm one, brother! I protest, if
"he were worth all the money in the
"*funds* I would not marry the *son* for the
"*sake* of the *father!* Why, he is an ab-
"solute *bear!* and, if we had not been
"here, I should not have wondered if he
"had actually attempted to *beat* Eliza
"out of her consent to the match!"—
A hearty laugh; and an exclamation from
both ladies, of—"God preserve me from
"the *Cinnamons!*" closed the conversa-
tion on the courtship.

CHAPTER V.

HOW SWEET ARE THE SMILES OF SUCCESS! ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY BEAM THEIR INFLUENCE UNEXPECTEDLY.

WEDNESDAY came, when it would be highly necessary to think of preparations for the splendid masquerade; as dresses and decorations, peculiar to the occasion, would be requisite; and might not be procurable on the instant: but, as if all the world combined together to render the state of our ladies doubly irksome, not a soul either knocked at the door, or rang at the bell, till past one o'clock;

when Sir William Vacant called to expell some of their *ennui*, by making various inquiries about the conduct of the *testy* old citizen. For he had already heard that the affair had *blown over*.

The laughable observations which occurred while the ladies were endeavouring to deliver the whole of the alderman's speeches, and to imitate his irritable behaviour, had almost expelled the splended masquerade from their memories;—the chagrin of disappointment was hastily yielding to the assaults of good humour, when Lady Harriett having asked Sir William a question twice over, turned to Eliza, and said—" I wonder how many " *plumbs* old *Testy* is really worth? as he " made so much *fuss* about it."

" Hey! Oh! twelve hundred, my lady," said the baronet, recollecting himself.

"Twelve hundred!" cried her ladyship—"What, *twelve hundred plumbs!* "—Impossible!"

"O no, no, no! my lady—*twelve hun-* "*hundred tickets* issued by the Duchess "of Centlivre for her masquerade! She "seems determined to out do all the mas- "querades ever given by duchesses, prin- "cesses, queens, or empresses! The *eclat* "will, I am rather apprehensive, exceed "any thing of the kind ever known; and "I should not be surprised if our papers "had to announce the rapturous intelli- "gence of a hundred people being suffo- "cated from the *exquisite* pressure of the "*glorious* cramming!"

"God bless me, Sir William! you have "put Eliza into the *twitters* as well as "myself!—Go we must; that's *poz!* if "it be possible. And, hitherto, we have

" not received one single answer to any of " our advertisements."

" I told you so, my lady—except they " were forged," said the baronet.

" Is it possible, that twelve hundred " tickets should be issued for a masque-" rade, and not so small a number as *four* " to be purchased for any money! This is " the very *acme* of ill-fortune!" said Eliza, rather seriously.

" Rather unlucky, to be sure, Miss; " if it really be true. Especially as the " rainy season was so soon expected, when " the *rascals* would have been obliged to " have retreated, or have surrendered, or " perished. However, if the re-inforce-" ments arrive in time, he will still be " able to present a *front* which will stagger " them; therefore, let us not despair, I

" say—an *able general,* and a handful of
" *brave Britons,* have done wonders with
" those *gentry* before now: and if we
" don't speedily receive some brilliant in-
" telligence, I am confident it will not be
" our fault. Besides, if our allies should
" but stand by us"—

" Sdeath! How vexatious, Sir Wil-
" liam!" cried Lady Harriett—" I could
" hardly listen to the Gazette of an im-
" portant victory, at a juncture so critical
" to us two, poor *unfortunates!* And away
" have you jumped to the frontiers of Por-
" tugal, to present an *imposing front* to
" the armies of *Buonaparte!* instead of
" *covering* our *march* in search of tickets,
" with intelligence of the *enemy* being
" waiting to receive us; or encouraging
" us in our *pursuit* with assurances of
" success."

"That is a for-lorn hope, my lady; "with a *breach* but half practicable, and "without the benefit of *scaling-ladders!* "I have already had an *audience* of the "*prime ministers* of two of the first "houses in the parish of St. James's; "and their opinions are in union, that "the *army* which you are in pursuit of, is "wholly *effective*—*entrenched* up to the "*chin*, and absolutely *unassailable!*—In "a word, my lady, the stipulated number of tickets is already issued; the "name of the party invited is inserted on "each; with a cursed *Nota Bene*, in "capitals—THIS TICKET IS NOT TRANSFERABLE. All the police-officers are to "be present; and the *prime-ministers* "above alluded to are actually engaged as "*nomenclators* for the gentlemen;—as "you will readily allow, he can be no "*gentleman* who is unknown at either of "their houses.—And, to prevent the la-

"dies from committing *mal-practices*, the "duchess's own *maid*, with the companion of the Marchioness of Moonshine's *protegee*, and Madame Herringbone, the great lace-woman in Bond "Street, are appointed a *committee* for "receiving the tickets from the ladies;— "with express injunctions to make them "*unmask*, that they may be assured the "*faces* tally with the *names*. If those "are not checques sufficient, I shall "wonder at it!"

"And this immensely long string of "insuperable difficulties, you, Sir William, fancy will deter us from continuing our pursuit after tickets! I don't "know what Lady Harriett may think of "them; but, for my part, I must own, "I feel fired the more to prosecute the "chace."

"What with the horrors of suffoca-
"tion, and danger of detection, before
"you!"

"Where there is no danger to encoun-
"ter, Sir William, no honour can be
"obtained.—I am a British *soldier* for
"that! and, so confident am I of vic-
"tory, (even from example) when the
"danger is imminent, and the ardor for
"engagement great; that, were I a gene-
"ral, it is not a trifling majority which
"should influence me to decline the com-
"bat.—Ha! A knock! Now, my dear
"Lady Harriett, if that should be a mes-
"senger with good news!"

"I must confess, Eliza, Sir William's
"speech of *insuperables*, has rather
"damped my ardor. However, we shall
"soon know the event."

A servant entering the room, pre-

sented a letter to Lady Harriett, and another to Eliza—saying, they were brought by a person in livery, who wanted no answer.

"Two tickets for the masquerade, as I "live!" cried Lady Harriett, in raptures.

"Two tickets for the masquerade, as I "live!" cried Eliza, equally rejoiced.

"Two thousand five hundred pounds! "A sharp day, that!" said Sir William.

"Two thousand five hundred pounds!" reiterated her ladyship, with evident symptoms of surprise—"What two thou-"sand five hundred pounds? Sir Wil-"liam."

"Yes, ladies; just two thousand five

"hundred pounds I lost on *Mayflower!* "And when Sir Thomas Round-Course "received the money, he clasped his "hands together, and exclaimed with just "such raptures. For, poor fellow! he "was run to the bitter end."

"Oh, is that all! I was afraid you was "alluding to some extravagant price which "you had paid for the tickets; as I am "sure they must have come from you; "and that you sent them in this private "manner merely to increase our surprise, "Therefore, as we certainly will pay for "them, I should not have liked to pamper "my curiosity at an enormous expense; "nor have put Eliza to a pecuniary incon-"venience to have paid for her's. Tell "us, then, candidly, what they actually "cost you. And—*have patience, good* "*Sir, and we will pay you all!*"

" Had they cost *me ever so much*, my
" lady, you may depend on it, after
" having sent them in so gallant a manner,
" I certainly should not have told you the
" expense attending them. But, upon
" my honour, I am as ignorant of their
" price, and from whom they came, as
" yourselves."

" Surely the earl cannot have done us
" so great an honour!" said Eliza.

" The earl, indeed! God help him!
" Make yourself easy on that head, Eliza.
" My noble brother would not have put
" himself to such an expense, or trouble
" either, for any person breathing; un-
" less they could have procured him a *job*,
" or a *borough*. Can you, Sir William,
" form an idea as to what the price of the
" four tickets might be?"

"Cannot, indeed, my lady; because "none have been sold: but, to my certain knowledge, "*one hundred guineas* "*were offered for four*."

"Infinitely obliged to you, Sir William," said her ladyship; while both ladies made him a profound curtsey—"and, as a token of our gratitude for your "politeness, Sir, Eliza shall present you "with one of her tickets; while I reserve "one for my lord."

Eliza instantly complied with the requisition, and presented a ticket to Sir William, who, bowing, thanked her; but, on casting his eyes over it, exclaimed—"Hey! Egad, this is curious! Why, this "is wrong, Miss O'Mara! Here is the "Earl of Hankering inserted in this! "Whoever is the presentor of those tickets, "I am sure I am under undescribable

"obligations to him; as he has promoted "my felicity, in no small degree, by "placing your ladyship under a kind of "compulsion to honour me with one of "yours; or I shall begin to be on the "*fidgets* how to get one at any rate."

"Well, then, Sir William, that it "may not be positively said—'Lady "Harriett Loveplumb gave Sir William "Vacant, Baronet, a ticket, that he might "go with her to the Duchess of Cent-"livres masquerade!' I will beg leave to "exchange with Eliza—for I really see "Sir William's name in this, which was "inclosed to me."

The tickets were exchanged accordingly at *par*; and Sir William having received his present from Eliza, retired immediately, promising to call early in the evening, and see if they would take a peep at *Macbeth*.

CHAPTER VI.

TO WHAT AWKWARD DILEMMAS ARE WE FREQUENTLY REDUCED BY BECOMING THE SLAVES OF PRIDE!

"If those tickets did not come from "Sir William, nor the earl; who, in "this very good-natured world, could "have sent them to us?" said Eliza; after each of the ladies had examined the whole—*quantum sufficit*.

"You have heard Sir William declare, "upon his honour, that he knew nothing "about them, my dear: and I will ven-

"ture to declare, upon my honour, the "earl is equally ignorant; so that every "circumstance relative to them, must "remain a mystery: except the certainty "that we really have them."

"If they should prove forged, after all! "A mere *hoax!* How ridiculous we should "appear in attempting to make use of "them: and be detected at the very "doors!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! And be taken "by the *police-officers* before their wor-"shipful *masters.* I do not like to fool "away money, Eliza—except for tickets "to a splendid masquerade, you may say—"but, positively, I would not murmur at "paying fifty pounds to see the earl and "Sir William called up to the *bar;* and "asked whom they were, and where "they came from, with all the *respectful*

"*politeness* peculiar to such situations!—
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I, absolutely, should die before they "dragged me to the *bar!* And, even "now, I actually tremble at the thought "of it. Good God! my dear lady, what "must *women* feel in such a situation?"

"I remember once hearing Counsellor "Alibi assure my father, that, by dint "of observation, he could, to a nicety, "apportion the ratio of punishment an-"nexed to crimes for which the females "were committed, merely by the appear-"ances of their countenances; from the "taunting insolent toss of the head, for a "paltry pitiful breach of the peace, to "the melancholy *sob* for murder or coin-"ing."

"Well! Seriously, it is a place I never

" wish to visit; not even from motives of
" curiosity—therefore, that we may avoid
" all danger of being drawn into an awk-
" ward scrape by these tickets, I really
" think we should make some enquiry, as
" to their validity, at least."

" Why, I really do not think they
" could easily be forged; for, they appear
" to me to have been struck with a die;
" and, if that be the case, it would not
" only require considerable time to coun-
" terfeit them, but considerable expense
" also; each of which is much against
" counterfeits of such a temporary na-
" ture."

" That they must have come from
" somebody who knows us, is evident,
" from the accuracy of the names; and
" that they must be conversant with the
" present state of the family, is also evi-

"dent, from the mode of coupling the "tickets; which struck your ladyship "very forcibly, I perceived, on Sir William making the discovery. There is a "mystery in the affair which I cannot "develope; nor can I divest myself of "apprehensions as to the result.—Suppose your ladyship were to send the "servant to *Centlivre-House*, that he "may learn whether they are actually "genuine or not?"

"Hum! There could be no great harm "in that, certainly: but it may be the "means of exposing the matter more than "there may be any necessity for. Surely "it could not be any of the Marchioness "de Piomberti's family or connexions "who have sent them!—Hey! It must "be so! Depend on it, my dear, the "tickets must have come from that quarter: and, if they deemed themselves

"under any little obligation to us, I am "sure they have adopted a mode of "making a most pleasing and ample re-"turn."

"I am half inclined to coincide with "your ladyship in that opinion; because, "I can think of nothing half so feasible. "But suppose you ask Sir William to as-"certain the validity of his own ticket? "There can be no harm in that."

"Aye, my dear; now you have hit "on an expedient which is unexception-"able, and shall not be forgotten; for "we had better make assurance doubly "sure, than be caught in a mistake—at "so critical a time, too. So, let us now "go, and see what directions it may be "necessary to send round the town, for "different articles, before we sit down to "dinner, and are joined by Sir William.

"I wish my lord would happen to drop in. "If the baronet does not bring him, I'll "send a servant."

Fortunately for the ladies, by the time they had finally determined to go to the masquerade as *ballad-singers*, each of them possessing an excellent voice, with much taste, and had given the suitable directions for the dresses, *et cetera*, the earl dropt in, just as they were sitting down to dinner; but, having *spoiled* his appetite by taking *turtle* at Birch's, on his return from the India-House, he could not eat.

"Then, as this mansion has, for the "last two hours, been a house of industry, "if your lordship cannot eat, you must "work.—So pray tell us the news of the "day."

"Why, faith Harriett, we have no-
"thing to brag of from abroad; and yet,
"our foreign affairs still bear a more
"favourable aspect than we had a right to
"expect. As to what length of time the
"fair side of the prospect may present
"itself, I will not presume to say; though
"I do not think that it requires the spirit
"of divination to ascertain."

"O no! certainly not, my lord!" said her ladyship, interrupting the earl, "why
"should it be necessary for a peer of the
"realm to possess the spirit of divination,
"in order to calculate to a nicety when
"his country will be ruined!—for, that
"was the *goal* which your lordship seemed
"to be posting to. But, as you know
"that I am *Miss Totherside*, my lord,
"suppose we adjourn the debate on *foreign*
"*affairs*, and move for a minute inspec-
"tion into the *home department*!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! You make me laugh "at your nonsense; though you always "interrupt me when I would wish to give "you some serious insight into our *external* "affairs.—And, as to the *home-depart-* "*ment*, as you call it, here we are ten "times worse! Here we are—but I must "not proceed, I see;—and yet, egad! "now I recollect myself, you—even you, "ladies, with some hundreds more, are "all *blown up!*—*Gone off* like so many "*rockets!* and how the catastrophe may "terminate is still in the womb of time."

"Catastrophe!—Blown up!—Still in "the womb of time!" cried the ladies. "What in the world can have been the "matter?"

"I mean—but let me take a glass of "Madeira, to refresh my memory. I

"mean, then, last evening, about nine "o'clock, the Duchess of Centlivre"—

"The Duchess of Centlivre!—What "of her?—Surely her grace is not indis-"posed?"

"Patience, good ladies! and you shall "hear.—As the Duchess of Centlivre was "taking tea with her *committee*; whom "she had honoured with an invitation, "that they might consult at leisure, if they "had taken every possible precaution for "guarding against the intrusion of impro-"per company—and company which her "grace did not think proper to see:—at "that critical moment a servant entered, "and, going close to her grace, from pru-"dential motives, such a party being pre-"sent, informed her grace, that the "*Prince of Pittimana's interpreter* was

" at the door in a carriage belonging to " the *royal suite*, and begged permission " to address her grace. It may readily " be supposed that the lady was somewhat " surprised at such a visit: she, however, " ordered candles in the lower drawing-" room, and went thither to receive the " gentleman.

" The good lady, a little confused with " conversing with her committee, and a " little more confused at the idea of such " a visit, had but just time to take her " seat, when a person, superbly dressed " in the Asiatic style, made his obeisance. " Having taken a seat, he addressed her " grace in a manner peculiarly fluent; " and, in very tolerable English, plea-" santly tinctured with the Italian dialect, " gave her grace to understand, that he " had the felicity of filling the office of " *principal interpreter* to the Sublime

" and Serene *Prince Pittimana*, heir ap-
" parent to the Supreme *Buonoraldos-*
" *parte*, Emperor of *Gibralontalatar*,
" which mighty empire rose, with stu-
" pendous magnificence, from the im-
" mense bosom of the undulating *Oceana*
" *Arubiscay*! That his sublime and se-
" rene highness, having arrived only the
" preceding day, and fearing that his
" grand *entre* would be considerably de-
" layed, on account of the ship, in which
" many inestimable presents were depo-
" sited, being detained under quarantine;
" he was extremely desirous of having his
" arrival as little promulgated as possible,
" but having been informed by him (the
" interpreter) of her grace's masquerade,
" which was to exceed every thing known
" in the East, in point of taste and mag-
" nificence, his sublime and serene high-
" ness was extremely anxious to be pre-
" sent; and would be proud to lay him-

" self under an obligation to her grace
" for a *dozen tickets* for himself and the
" *noblesse* of his *suite* ;—if her grace
" would have the goodness to keep his
" presence a profound secret from all but
" *herself!*—to whom he would be known
" by the profusion of jewels in his turban,
" with a diamond full as large as a *double-*
" *walnut* in the centre of the crescent!"

" What an affair to her grace!" continued his lordship. " She had solemnly
" vowed not to issue *one* more than twelve
" hundred tickets ; and the twelve hun-
" dred were actually delivered! But how
" resist the entreaty of such a prince! A
" prince who would yield more *eclat* to
" her masquerade than all the princes in
" Europe at the head of their armies!—
" The entreaty made by so elegant an
" interpreter, too!—Poh! Hesitation in
" such a case would have been the height

"of folly! She had a few stamped tickets "remaining; and superior *eclat* was di- "vine!—Filling a dozen up with *Prince* "*Pittimana and suite,* she presented "them to the interpreter, with a most "luminous compliment to the prince with "a diamond as big as a *double-walnut* in "the centre of his crescent; and actually "saw the interpreter to the door of the "hall. Then, while returning to the "*committee,* her grace congratulated her- "self on the lucky mode, which, by mere "accident, she had adopted for revealing "the secret of the prince's presence—by "having entered his name on the tickets."

"Upon my word! We shall have some "*cramming,* indeed!" cried both the ladies.

"I am afraid not, ladies; for her grace "found it impossible to refrain from in-

"forming the *committee* of the very high
"honour intended her; but, under re-
"peated promises of the most profound
"secrecy.—And the *committee*, under full
"as many promises from others, revealed
"the intended presence of a mighty *prince*
"from the *East*, with a *double-walnut*
"diamond in the centre of his crescent!
"to more than a hundred people of qua-
"lity, by twelve o'clock this morning—
"some of them ministers of state, too—
"not one of whom had heard of such a
"mighty prince being arrived; or, of any
"prince at all even coming from the East!
"Whispers, they say, beget whispers;
"so that, by one o'clock, it was *buzzed*
"in her grace's ears that she had been
"*hoaxed* out of the tickets by some arch
"impostor!—The consequence was na-
"tural—her grace listened with atten-
"tion—grew pale at the intelligence—
"and died"—

"Died!—Good heavens, my lord!—
"Died! did you say?"

"Why, certainly I did say so, ladies; "but, had you not interrupted me, I "should have added—with apprehensions "of the *buz* proving but too true. Her "grace, it seems, was actually catechising "herself in *geography* and the *use of the* "*globes*, to ascertain the exact situation "of the undulating *Ocean of Arubiscay*, "as well as the mighty empire *Gibralon-* "*talatar*; and had, mentally, censured "her instructors for being so ignorant of "the sciences which they had professed "to teach. As to the proper names of "the *prince*, the *emperor*, the *empire*, "and the undulating *Ocean*; she had "reconciled them to their European *roots*, "by supposing that it might be the cus- "tom of those distant countries to build "their names on foreign *roots* of eminent

"extraction; as we christen our children "after the king, queen, princes, and "princesses, whom we idolize! But the "*buzzing* plucked up every thing—*roots* "and all! And, spite of the hopes of "those—who actually entertained none "about the matter—she was left in down-"right despair! Of course, ladies, you "may, every moment, expect a *bulletin* "of health; coupled with another, for "adjourning the masquerade——*Sine* "*Nocte!*"

"Oh!—for goodness sake, my dear "lord, have a little mercy upon us! I see "through the *Prince of Pittimana*, with "a diamond as big as a double-walnut, "most perfectly; and shall certainly ex-"pire with laughter, if you don't call "some serious subject to divert my atten-"tion from it."

While the ladies were moistening their handkerchiefs with their tears almost hysterical, Sir William entered, very seriously, and took his place at the table.—Lady Harriett, therefore, assumed as serious a countenance as possible, and said—"Bless me, Sir William, what a dreadful "affair this is about the *Prince of Pitti-"mana!*"

"Yes, very dreadful—very hard upon "Sir Lordly, indeed, my lady; but cer-"tainly merited."

"Very dreadful upon Sir Lordly!—"Why, what has happened to him?"—and all smothered a laugh about the *eastern prince*, with a look of anxiety about Sir Lordly Upright.

"Only, rather than make one grateful "bow to the duchess for *five* tickets, the

"knight preferred making *fifty*, and giv-
"ing twice as many guineas besides to a
"fellow whom he never saw before; and,
"in consequence of the rascal being de-
"tected this morning, in the very act of
"obtaining a diamond crescent, through
"false recommendations, and seven tickets
"more discovered on him, the whole
"number being surreptitiously obtained,
"are declared *inadmittable!* So the poor
"knight has lost his money, and will, of
"course, lose a sight of the masquerade,
"too!"

"That, really, would be a pity!" said Eliza—"and, though I do not know "the duchess, yet, I think, if she were "acquainted with the real state of the "case, she would suffer his family, at "least, to be admitted; or send him fresh "tickets."

"Don't know what to say to that, "Miss O'Mara.—'If there were no *re-* "*ceivers* there would be no *thieves!*" is an "axiom in law long established: so, if "there were none ready to purchase "tickets surreptitiously obtained, there "would be none willing to run the hazard "of obtaining them by unfair means, or "forging them. Sir Lordly Upright "knew perfectly well, that the Duchess "of Centlivre shuddered at the very idea "of a single ticket getting into the hands "of the public, but through her distinct "address; of course, was guilty of a "meanness—if not a crime, in sacrificing "morality to pride. He could not en- "dure the *degradation* of thanking an "amiable duchess for five tickets, lest "she should whisper the *wonderful price* "he paid for them!—but could readily "cringe to a rascal, and pay an exhor- "bitant price, too, because he flattered

" himself that the *fellow*, for his own " sake, would keep the matter a profound " secret. To his great mortification, how- " ever, the *scoundrel* (a devilish smart " looking man) was brought into a public " coffee-room, where, the remaining tick- " ets being taken from his pocket, he " confessed the whole of his *prince-making* " *scheme*; and they were instantly sent " to Centlivre-House.—By the bye, ladies, " the tickets were stamped exactly like " ours; so you need be under no appre- " hension as to their validity.—But it " grows late; therefore, if you are in- " clined for the *tragedy*, it is time to " set off."

" One question, and I have done, Sir " William. My lord mentioned somewhat " about the *interpreter* going to Centlivre " House in a carriage of the royal *suite*: " How could the *impostor* have contrived " to manage that matter?"

"Hatchett happened to have a decent
"carriage from the Muse, to dispose of
"or to let—and the long tailed black
"horses were hired of a *black-job* stable-
"keeper at the White Bear, in Piccadilly.
"—So, now, let us start."

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE LESS IS THE PLEASURE OF PRAISING, TO A DELICATE MIND, THAN THE PLEASURE OF BEING PRAISED.

ON the ladies entering to take their places, they saw but few persons in that box, though the play had actually commenced. "Our *two* friends cannot be "yet arrived," thought the ladies, "but "will not, surely, lose the opportunity "of enjoying such a treat."—So, taking their seats, they instantly became attentive to the scene—as much as ladies can be supposed to be attentive to an inter-

esting object, when objects still more interesting, are, every now and then, rushing across their memories; and the clashing of the doors of various boxes, forcing them to cast an eye towards them, in order to observe who were entering so abruptly, while such a piece was going on.

Two acts had passed over without *any body* asking the ladies how they liked the performance, or even making their appearance in any part of the theatre. At length the troublesome *tat-too* of anxiety began to beat up their apprehensions; and a thousand questions—all equally *proper* for young ladies to entertain for strangers—forcibly suggested themselves in rapid succession.—"Where can they "be?—What can have become of them? "—Surely they are not well!—Surely "they are indisposed!—Perhaps not in "town!—Perhaps in the country.—Pos-

"sibly they may be engaged at some "party!—Possibly enjoying themselves at "some delightful entertainment!"—All equally *consistent* and soothing to disappointed expectations, rattled o'er their minds; forming no inapplicable counterpart to the *consistent* scene of the *witches*, and the not less *consistent* contents of the *cauldron*.

It has been observed, by several of our profound philosophers, that a *ball*, taken at the rebound, is increased in its velocity in the exact *ratio* of the propelling body, added to the power of propulsion which the ball retained at the instant it received the stroke. Even so did it happen to our ladies; for, having frequently cast their eyes round the circle—or arch of circle—or segment of a horse-shoe—or of some other curvilinear figure which we are not immediately prepared to define; their

rotatory motion had acquired a considerable degree of propulsive force; when, happening to *ground* on the cheek of the Honourable Miss Mackarel; and being taken at the *hop* by the identical *two friends*, who had, for so immense a period, been here—and there—and every where, but just exactly where they should have been; so, taken at the *hop*, we repeat, by way of reinforcing our simile, their eyes flew round the remainder of the circle—or arc—or segment, with such intense velocity, as to shock the ladies—even into *startation*, while so hastily re-occupying their *seats* in the *sockets!*

"Bless me, Lady Harriett!" cried Eliza, nodding her head, "is not that *Juba* "conversing with the young lady nearly "opposite?"

"Yes—I was that instant observing

"them: and *Cato* is standing behind "them. The young lady seems mightily "entertained!—I don't wonder at not "having"—The entrance of *Mrs. Siddons* claimed the attention of the house; and they could not, with decency, refuse to obey the pleasing summons; though they would have given a little finger to have been indulged with a favourable opportunity of making observations; and venting little witty speeches, in which ladies, not more than half pleased, are generally known to excel—even to loquacity! However, they resolved on losing no time in making themselves ample amends so soon as the act should be over; and were preparing to commence operations the moment the prompter's bell announced the signal of cessation; but, missing the gentlemen from the opposite box, and perceiving the lady remain, to all appearance unconcerned at their absence, the *mists*

of prejudice began hastily to evaporate; and the sudden dispersion of the long and far-extending clouds of apprehension, became halcyon prognostics of speedy sunshine.

But here we have another profound philosophical observation; that—"The more "rapid the absorption of moisture, the "sooner may rain be expected."—And so it had nearly fallen out with our ladies; for, they had no sooner experienced a momentary relief from ideas which they scarcely knew what to make of, than, even before the music had ceased, they saw the same *friends* in another box, conversing with the blooming widow—the Countess of Carlow.

"Poh!—Nonsense!" exclaimed Lady Harriett—"I protest they have suffered "themselves to be drawn into conversa-

"tion with the *elderly* Countess of Car-
"low! Then they don't mean to come
"near us this evening, I suppose: though
"I don't know that we said any thing
"last Saturday which could have offended
"them. Well! if they can find more
"*agreeable* company to converse with,
"they are very welcome."—And her lady-
ship indulging herself with a slight toss
of the head, was actually turning towards
Sir William, in order to resent the in-
attention of others, by most agreeably in-
terrupting him in the midst of a delight-
ful reverie, on what might be won upon
the Duke of G——'s *Atalanta*, if every
event would occur which he could arrange
—when the prompter's bell bad the music
cease.—Attention, consequently, became
the order of the day; and each resolved
to repay herself for circumstances dis-
agreeable, by marking every look and
action throughout the act. Nor is it a

trifling compliment, even to theatrical excellence, that ladies, so situated, should have felt their attention most highly gratified.

"Well, ladies! how have you been en-"tertained this evening?" were the welcome sounds which saluted their ears, before they had time to look round them, after the conclusion of the act. The *two friends* having entered softly about ten minutes before.

The usual ceremonies having passed, Lady Harriett replied to the question.—"This is the first time that my dear "friend and I have had an opportunity of "seeing those celebrated performers; and "my feelings, hitherto, are too vast for "description."

A desperate quarrel in the pit, which,

after much scuffling, ended in the expulsion of both the combatants, to the great satisfaction of both pit and boxes, prevented any further conversation during the music: and, all the fifth act, not a word was said—but, the moment the play was over, *Juba*, addressing himself to Eliza, observed—" Now, Madam, I presume, " my worthy friend may hazard the " expressions—wonder-struck!—ravished! "—delighted!—astonished! without dan- " ger of meeting your negative; as few " persons, I believe, ever saw a tragedy " better performed."

" Indeed, Sir, high-sounding as the " epithets are, I cannot say that I did " not feel every impression—and, in " no small degree.—Will you, Sir, (ad- " dressing herself to *Cato)* have the good- " ness to indulge me with your candid " opinion of that *lady?*"

"With a deal of pleasure, Madam; and "in very few words, too: for, although "most public characters are partial to "long investigations, where the chance of "decision is in their favour, there is a "kind of fatality which inhibits verbosity, "when speaking of the *highest* and the "*lowest*.—As a thousand comparative "compliments cannot add to what is al-"ready excellent; and mercy should ever "prevent us from endeavouring to render "the insignificant still more so. I, Madam, "have seen many eminent *actresses*, in "my time—I have some remembrance of "*Mrs. Pritchard*, and a familiar recol-"lection of the great abilities of *Mrs.* "*Barry* and *Mrs. Yates*. To do jus-"tice to the memory of those ladies, I "must say, I think I have seen each of "them perform a favourite part nearly as "well as *Mrs. Siddons*; but I never saw "*one*, who, like her, could perform all

"her cast of parts with excellence so "nearly equal! As, *here*, we have all "first-rate playing and no mediocrity!— "*There*, I hardly know on which side "the majority lay; as mediocrity was no "novelty with them."

"As the lady has been so highly cele- "brated for many years, Sir, may I ask "if you think she still retains her meri- "dian excellence?"

"The *Kemble family* possess an ex- "cellent stamina, Madam; and not only "do retain their meridian powers; but, "with due attention to their constitutions, "may, and I sincerely hope, will, retain "them for several years. For, woe to "poor *Melpomone* when they decline!— "And now, Madam, as this is the first "time that you ever saw those performers,

" suffer me to ask your opinion of the
" gentleman."

" Nay, Sir, now you are too hard a
" *task-master!*—I can only say, that I
" have experienced every sensation which
" I can conceive to be peculiar to excel-
" lent acting; and, in this instance, I
" can safely appeal to public testimony for
" the propriety of my feelings; as he
" must, evidently, be a performer of the
" first distinction, who could maintain the
" highest seat in the public estimation;
" and for so many years, too!"

" And it is a source of much satisfac-
" tion to me, Madam, and, no doubt, to
" the public also, to reflect, that, when,
" some years hence, this gentleman shall
" retire, and seek solace from the fatigues
" of his profession, the *stage* will not be

"left without a *Kemble*, who will tread "firmly in *his steps*."

The farce was performed in the truly respectable style in which the farces are generally got up at that theatre; and the *Jeremy Diddler* of *Mr. Jones*, was so highly wrought, that *Cato* could not help exclaiming—"Yes, ladies, there you have "the pleasure of seeing an excellent spe-"cimen of the pure comic acting of my "friend *Lewis*, without his imperfectly "rapid enunciation! Here we have an-"other *chasm* in the theatrical *cast* of "first-rate characters, not only well sup-"plied, but *filled*."

While our party was retiring from the box, the same gentleman said—"As I un-"derstand that all the polite and amiable "world is to be at the masquerade on Fri-"day, you, ladies, must be there, of course.

" Nor is there now any danger of post-
" ponement; though affairs in that quar-
" ter bore but a gloomy aspect this morn-
" ing."

The ladies confessed that they had received tickets; and, smiling, said—" We
" mean to sing some *duets*, as a couple of
" *ballad-singers*."—A hint which seemed to be received with peculiar satisfaction by the gentlemen.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW MANY MEN, OF INFERIOR RANK IN LIFE, FANCY THEMSELVES AS GREAT AS ALEXANDER!

As *eight and forty hours*, even with the *diminutives*, breakfasts, dinners, teas, suppers, and attempting to sleep; was soon found too lingering an *eternity* to be endured by our ladies, with any tolerable degree of patience, at a period so nearly attached to the hour when all the *belles* and *beaux* in Britain were to assemble for the masquerade; they seized the happy advantage of a call, from the peer and the

baronet, on the Thursday about noon, to request their company at dinner; and to take a peep at the *Circus* in the evening; which requisition they readily promised to comply with; and attended accordingly.

The ladies having never been to either of the *Summer Theatres* on the Surrey side of the bridges; as those places of public amusement are, now, emphatically called; were highly entertained with the appearance of the house—the appearance of the audience—and the appearance of the performers. The opera was really tolerable; and the part of *Macbeth* which they saw, was most monstrously entertaining!

"O dear!" exclaimed Eliza, "I should "like to visit this place often; as every "thing is so diverting; and the *tout en* "*semble* so prodigiously delightful!"

"Yes, Madam," said a gentleman, whom the ladies took for a young clergyman—"here you have every thing delightful!—"the pieces are delightful!—the music is "delightful!—the singing is delightful!—"the playing—I beg pardon, I should "have said *acting*, here—the acting is de-"lightful!—and the jingling of words, "somewhat like metre, in the *prose run* "*mad*, is most delightful, indeed! Then "we shine in the beautiful, also, Madam "—as we have beautiful boxes—beautiful "pit—beautiful gallery—beautiful scenery "—and beautiful performers! Some, in-"deed, particularly of the *male-class*, ex-"cel so much in that divine quality, as "frequently to rouse sharp *rencountres* "among the eminent *print-sellers* who "deal in such beautiful articles; as to "who shall be indulged with the first ex-"hibition of some of the *foremost rank*, "studying their parts, with the book in

"the hand, in beautiful *prints*, in their
"shop windows!"

"Hey! beautiful prints! What prints?
"Dogs! Horses! Game! cried Sir Wil-
"liam;" who had caught hold of some part of the beautiful story.

The ladies could not restrain a *titter*—at the baronet's dogs—horses—game!—It would break out in spite of the *lip-biting* which they dared to exert. The gentleman looked a little awkward.—The earl was looking at one of the beautiful inhabitants of *Dover Street*, who happened to be stuck up in an opposite box.

"Oh! Aye! Now I recollect Mr. ——
"Why, I think, you gave Sir Yep Flank-
"em a very decent, clean *rubbing-down*
"last Sunday."—But the gentleman quitted the box; and, probably, for pruden-

tial reasons, might not think proper to hear the baronet.

"You seem to know the gentleman, "Sir William. Pray who is he?"

"Hum! Can't exactly recollect, my "lady; but I know he is the editor of "some Sunday paper, which professes to "examine the abilities of our theatrical "performers very minutely; and, some-"times, I am told, he *hits* them very "hard, too!"

"If he does not *hit* them wantonly," said Eliza, with a smile—"he merits the "applause of the public, and the per-"formers thanks."

Having enjoyed themselves sufficiently at the Summer Theatre, and being anxious to get to the *Lyceum* by the com-

mencement of the last act of the opera, to hear the *polacca*, the little party took advantage of a burst of applause, after an *encore* of a favourite song, from the old favourite performer, *Johannot*; and escaped almost unperceived.

Fortunately for the little party, as the second act of the *Cabinet* was just concluding (and a family leaving a box on account of the sudden indisposition of a young lady) they found plenty of room; and a front row, too! Nor had they been seated more than a minute, when, casting their eyes round the house, they met those of *Cato* and *Juba*; and received a bow from each.

"What! why, your theatrical friends "are retiring early to-night, ladies," said Sir William; while the ladies were curtsying to a party in the front boxes.

"So they are, I protest!—What can "make them quit the house so very soon?" said her ladyship.

Eliza smiled at the astonishment of her amiable friend—"Probably they may wish "to get some rest to-night, my lady; as, "if they go to the masquerade, they will "get little to-morrow night, I am sure. "What think you, my lord?"

"I don't imagine that any of us will "get much before Saturday's sun is well "up."—

"This is a felicity which we little ex-"pected to have been indulged with to-"night!" said *Cato* and *Juba*, while entering the box—to the surprise of all, but displeasure of none.

After the usual compliments, lady

Harriett informed the gentleman, that, their reason for coming so late was, they had been to the *Circus;* and called in merely to hear the *polacca,* and see the *farce.*

"A smart place, that *Circus*, my lady," said *Cato*—"Busy bustling people there "—very handy and clever at any thing; "and I don't know but that is full as well "as being excellent in some *parts*, and "but indifferent in others;—especially "for what professors term a *gad-fly* thea-"tre; of which class a numerous set is "springing up round our metropolis."

The ladies then informed the gentlemen how they had been entertained; and of the sarcastic encomiums of the fancied clergyman.

"Rather severe, to be sure, ladies,"

said *Cato*—" but, if people will lay them-
" selves open to satire, they must not
" feel offended, if they find it obtruded
" on them."—The bell rang, and the third
act commenced.

At the close of the first scene, Eliza
exclaimed—" Poor Peter! He seems to
" be exceedingly hurt at ingratitude. We
" might just as well, now-o'-days, be hurt
" at the idea of being rattled over danger-
" ous pavements; and yet, thanks to our
" commissioners, the farther we go the
" more we see of it."

Lady Harriett remarked—that she
thought him a very good performer.

" Who! *Penson*, my lady," said *Cato*,
" He's a *blockhead!* He always reminds
" me of the very serious conduct of an *old*
" *admiral*, who contented himself with

"obtaining but half a victory, rather than "disgrace his *line-of-battle* by suffering "his forty-four gun frigates to come into "action!—So, this Peter, because he "possesses first-rate talents, has taken it "into his head, that the *galleries* are to "be *brought down* by acting agreeably to "the pure dictates of nature; and persists "in leaving *mummery* to those who want "it. God help him! he knows but little "of modern galleries, if he fancies that a "low-comedian can claim their *thunders* "of applause, without flashing *mummery* "among them, to rouse the *reports* with. "—By the bye, ladies, I hope we shall "have the honour of seeing you again, "before the conclusion of the season, "when I may have an opportunity of in-"troducing to your notice, the pantomi-"mical anticks of some of our *mumming-master-generals*; and, of evincing to "you, the superior influence of such "talents on a modern audience!"

After the bursts of applause at the conclusion of the encore of the *polacca* had ceased, *Cato* continued—"Aye, that was "worth hearing, ladies—we had some "fine tones there; as *Mr. Philips'* voice "is steady, and does not require incessant *belching* to aid him while sustaining a note, or running a smooth passage. We have there, too, somewhat "to admire even in the dialogue; as, "after singing a song in style, he can "*look* to please the eye—and *speak* to "touch the heart!"

"Did you ever see *Madame Storace* "perform the part of *Floretta?*" asked Lady Harriett.

Juba caught the opportunity of replying—"Yes, my lady; and with great "pleasure, too. But I do not think that "she sang the songs, or the duet with

"*Orlando,* by any means so well as *Mrs.*
"*Mountain,* who is, really, a most lovely
"performer! Yet, I cannot say that she
"is quite so *comically happy* as the other
"lady, in some of the duets with *Whim-*
"*sicalo.*"

"*Madame Storace,*" observed *Cato*—
"was extremely clever in the character;
"but, should we not recollect what a
"tower of excellence she had to support
"herself against? The gentleman who
"performs the part of *Whimsicalo* to-
"night has considerable merit; but, while
"*Munden's Whimsicalo* shall live in the
"memory of an English audience, *Flo-*
"*retta,* charming as she is, must expect
"to sink some effect, by having to *lift*
"her lover a little, as well as to *trip* it
"herself."

"Upon my word, I think, *Mr. Ox-*

"*berry* is an excellent substitute for "*Mr. Matthews*, and makes a great deal "of the *old marquis*," said Eliza, addressing herself to *Juba*.

"He does so, Madam," replied that gentlemen—"and yet I have sometimes "fancied that *Mr. Matthews*' natural "*forte* lay in the representation of old "characters."

"He has much merit, for the present "day, in all his characters," observed *Cato*—"except lovers and gentlemen; in "which *casts* he can seldom stride over "the pale of mediocrity—so little in unison are *nature* and *acting*, in some "characters! For the gentleman was actually a very warm lover; and is an "affectionate husband—a tender parent— "and a genteel friend. But the characters of modern dramatic pieces seldom

"urge our performers to court *Nature* for
"a hand-maid.—The more eccentric the
"more meritorious in the eyes of the
"*gods!*—and, in that happy *knack*, this
"gentleman has eminently acquired their
"thunders of approbation."

So soon as the first act of the melo-drama was over, Lady Harriett, turning round to the gentlemen, exclaimed—"What a "bewitching little creature *Ella Rosen*-"*berg* is!"

"Aye, my lady," replied *Cato*—"and "her merit is as bewitching as her per-"son. She does not appear to be very "*heavy*; and yet, if you will pardon my "near approach to a *pun*, as well as a "paradox, I will venture to say, and, "indeed it is the case with many of our "modern farces—the *weight* of the prin-

"cipal character keeps the piece from "sinking."

"I did not know that *Mrs. Edwin* was "so clever in serious characters: I thought "she only played those of *Mrs. Jordan*." And Eliza, while speaking, addressed herself to *Cato*.

"Well, Madam! I remember *Mrs.* "*Jordan* playing serious characters; and, "with so fine a voice, and evident talent, "that, managers of the keenest discern-"ment, had not a doubt but she would "prove a *star* in the *tragic line*; and, "so she would, to a certainty, had she "not preferred becoming the *sun* of "*comedy*;—knowing there was a *sun* of "*tragedy* already.—Long may both those "*suns* continue to irradiate our theatres "with the refulgent splendor of their "*beams!* But, when our comic *sun* shall

"determine wholly to withdraw its cheer-
"ing rays from an enraptured audience,
"I am more than half inclined to think,
"that its lovely successor is now before
"us; and, though its rising beams may
"not glow quite so warmly, I trust those
"of its meridian altitude will fall but very
"little short."

Lady Harriett, at the conclusion of the last scene, observed to *Cato*, that she had not seen an after-piece so well represented for a considerable time.

"Why, to speak in the technical
"phrase of theatrical management, ladies,
"the piece is *well got up.—Mr. Hol-*
"*land* and *Mr. Penley* are performers of
"great merit.—*Mr. Raymond* is of the
"old school—his theatrical reputation has
"been long established: and *Mr. Wrench*
"is a performer of such rising talent,

"that, if my judgement do not much "deceive me, he will soon prove of high "consequence."

Juba having concluded some observations which he had been making to the earl, on the providential escape of an amiable *prince*, from the dagger of one of the *tyrant of Europe's* infernal assassins; and the infinite anxiety which the whole of the august and glorious family evinced for his recovery;—to the eternal disgrace of the haughty *upstart*, who treats his *brothers* like the rest of his *slaves!*—his lordship took Eliza by the hand, and the company departed.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW MANY THOUSAND TIMES HAS ENGLAND BEEN PROCLAIMED UTTERLY RUINED; YET, EVERY SUCCEEDING YEAR, PRESENTS INCREASE OF ELEGANCE AND GRANDEUR!

AFTER a crawling morning—a cruising noon—and an absolutely crippled afternoon; as long, in the idea of our lovely *Inseparables*, as Shakspeare's Seven Ages; the happy hour arrived, when the earl and the baronet made their appearance—the former as a *highland chieftain*—the latter as a *Newmarket jockey*. Much laughing, and some compliments, on the

various characters assumed, and the ability with which they were supported, passed during tea; after which, at the earnest request of the baronet, the ladies, for the third time that day, rehearsed Mozart's beautiful duet—*Hence with Melancholy!* which they performed so well as to gain the rapturous applause of Sir William; and more than one compliment even from the earl. At length, the watchman calling past eleven o'clock, the carriage was ordered, and the joyous friends set forward for Centlivre-House.

That the party, from the well-known taste and spirit of the duchess, had entertained very sanguine ideas of the magnificence of the *tout en semble,* is certainly true; but, their ideas had been moderate, compared to the splendor which attracted their astonishment on every side. To form a tolerable estimate of the brilliancy,

to those who were not present, would be impossible; but, by way of aiding their invention a little, we will venture to inform them, that the loan of additional *lamps, lanthorns,* and *lighting,* for the great room only, amounted exactly to *one thousand pounds!* And, as there were thirteen rooms laid open, besides avenues, galleries, staircases, &c. we may safely estimate the illuminating department (within doors) at *five thousands pounds!* —What was eastern splendor to such magnificence!

At twelve o'clock there were more than a thousand persons present. Yet, though the rooms might be termed *full,* they were not inconveniently so. Soon after twelve, however, a very sensible pressure was felt; and an universal burst of laughter ensued, from the sudden appearance of two gentlemen:—the one most superbly

dressed, in the *Asiatic costume*, with an excellent artificial *diamond*, actually as large as a *walnut*, in the centre of the *crescent*; and, around the *turban* were arranged artificial *rubies*, forming the distinct words—*Prince Pittimana.*—On the turban of the other, with artificial *emeralds*, were arranged—*Interpreter to P. P.*—Even the duchess could not help laughing heartily while she received their compliments in front of a recess at the upper end of the great room; which was literally crammed for the moment, from the curiosity instantaneously roused by the appearance of characters, an account of which, with the *interpreter's* manœuvre, had occupied a place in all the papers. But as the curiosity abated, the pressure subsided.

It being soon afterwards officially whispered, that her grace had, for some weeks,

been occupied in composing a kind of *device*, or *billet*, for each of her *guests*, numbers again thronged to the spot where the lovely authoress was stationed; and receiving a *billet*, taken from a drawer of a large *casket*, each was requested to pass on, in order to make room for others; or the place would soon have been in a state of suffocation.

With respect to the labels, or billets, few seemed pleased while perusing their own, yet generally smiled on looking over those delivered to others: for, as conscience has an eye far keener than a hawk, and will sometimes induce us to attempt stretching a cap on our heads, scarcely big enough for an infant, so many fancied that the *labels* alluded to themselves—some to their relations—and some were ready to put the *saddle* on the backs of large parties! Of such a number, it would

be impossible to recollect the whole, but, as we paid particular attention to about a score, and had an opportunity of looking over them, while the parties were perusing them, we will give every aid in our power to explain, not only the *labels*, but the appearance of those to whom they were given.

The first person whom we had an opportunity of observing attentively, was very infirm; his deportment was insinuating, and his aspect cunning. He received a billet, containing the following words:—"I had been happy though all "the world had fallen together by the "ears, so I had kept religion at a dis-"tance!—Yes, soon should I have *led* "them all; or have gratified my spleen, at "least, by drawing them, as Cromwell "did, before me."

Soon after the infirm *mask*, with steps of shrewd precaution, a beauteous *nun* advanced.—She, hesitatingly, received her billet, and sought a corner which she thought most private, ere she would venture to peruse it.—The words were—
" She who grants a favour, in these all-
" prying times, should confer it in a ce-
" metry, where Terrors appalling presence
" would keep all busy eyes away."

Next came a jovial set of *masks*, as from the festive board. Having received their labels, we looked over one: 'twas—
" Beware! Be bold and steady; persevere
" in your gallant exertions to restore the
" freedom of commerce, and independence
" of Europe; and, may the God of Na-
" tions ordain that glory and success shall
" follow your endeavours!"

After the jovial *masks*, a female, of

form most lovely, and her dress a demure Quaker, made several efforts, describing what our sailors call a traverse, ere she arrived at the recess.—Her label was in rhyme—

"If still you will be fond of *sipping,*
"You'll not surprise me if caught *tripping;*
"For, while your *guards* in slumbers lay,
"Who'll drive th' inveigling *fiend* away?"

Next approached a son of Mars, armed *cap-a-pee!* who had been some time conversing with a *vestal virgin.* The gallant officer marched up to the lovely duchess, and, receiving his billet, hastily perused it: 'twas—"He whose soul is stung by "conscience, may well want a soft *pillow* "to rest his head on."

After a short turn, the *vestal virgin* came up; and took her scroll—in rhyme:

"*Redcoats* are dang'rous to the beauteous fair!
"Too oft their fond affections they'll ensnare;
"Then basely leave their lovely *dupes* to grieve;
"For soldiers never feel the wounds they give!"

To her succeeded a tall *mask*, in buckram-suit, and be-whiskered to the tip of the nose: he rattled up towards her grace, and confidently took his billet: 'twas—"If men could conquer by talking, what "a hero should I have been!"

Soon appeared a *mask*, with air unsatisfied, and dress—a double coat! On one side *blue*, the other *red*. He moved with solem pace towards the duchess; and, taking his scroll, with pensive melancholy, read—"Curse on the tyrant! Had I but "met him, hand to hand, when on the "arid *desart*, how many nations had "escaped a scourging!"

Up, then, as quickly as Nature would permit, advanced a *tottling* flower-girl, who kept, per force, incessant motion of her head. She took a paper, and, affecting to *hum* a sprightly tune, perused—

"When I was a young one, what girl was like me!
"As wanton—as airy—as brisk as a *bee*!
"All books of devotion now lay on my shelf;—
"I teach that to others I once learnt myself."

The flower-girl was followed by a *mask* in a sailor's jacket, of *rotund* form, who seemed to have been battening on biscuit and beef, till he had grown nearly as large as the vessel he commanded: he *rolled* up to the recess, and boldly asked for one of *them there* papers. One was given him: it contained—"Where is the "*turtle*?—Who has got the *turtle*?— "What is a victorious landing without "*turtle*?—I would n't be commander of

"the fleet, and be deprived of eating "*them there turtle!*"

The turtle-merchant was followed by a jolly, ruddy *mask*, singing, or, rather, roaring—"There's a sweet little cherub "sits perch'd up aloft, to take care of the "life of poor Jack!" He staggered up to the recess; when her-grace, sweetly smiling, presented the following billet:—"There are certain *houses* in which it is "dangerous to *kick up rows;* as the "*waiters* are surly *fellows;* and will not "only seize any man by the collar, if "duly ordered, but *lug* him out *neck and* "*heels*, if he persist in being riotous. "However, the *culprits* have the com-"fort of a good bed, and decent enter-"tainment, while doing penance."

The next whom we had leisure to observe, was a *mask* in an old military uni-

form, with a sword of a tremendous length. His hesitating method of approaching her grace, bespoke a mind rather ill at ease. Receiving a label, with an unsteady hand, he read—" Curse on
" all rivers, swamps, and dykes, say I!
" —I had been *Cæsar*, but for such ob-
" structions!"

The warrior was succeeded by a most elegant-looking *Squire Hawthorn*, who gave some of the songs in a style truly delightful; but we cannot compliment him very highly as to representing the character: several masterly attempts to excel were certainly made, but they were attempts only. Indeed, the deportment of the *mask*, while presenting some *game* to the duchess, as well as while receiving the label, would have put the whole family of the *Hawthorns* to the blush; as it evinced the most accomplished gentleman.

He walked a few yards from the recess, when, slightly starting, on looking at the billet, he read—

"Thou, like the glorious sun,
"Thy splendid course shall run!"

The *Squire Hawthorn* was closely followed by a beauteous young female—*A virgin of the sun!* who, with the air of a princess, and dignity of a queen, moved up to the recess, and, with a smile, put forth her hand for a billet, which, with a smile, was given. The motto was—"Tu-"tored by such a parent, well may the "world anticipate the wisdom of an *Eli-*"*zabeth* with the virtues of a *Charlotte!*"

Next followed a *mask* in the character of a Prince of Indostan. He gazed very attentively at the casket—"You seem to "admire the repertory of my *enigmas,* "Sir," said the fair possessor. "I beg

"your grace's pardon!" returned the *mask* —"I thought I saw a map of the *penin-* "*sula*." Receiving a label, he walked onward, and perused—"Yes, subtle Fame! "a shadow I have found thee, hitherto, "though won most hardly!—Another "mode I'll take to woo thy more sub- "stantial charms; and, like the wary "*Fabius*, with caution win an empire; "how much soever it may hurt my soul "to curb the heroic fervour of my men!"

Then marched up a military *mask*, tall —thin—alert—erect, as conscious of his worth. Her grace smiled as he approached, and presented the following billet—"How "many heart-broken wives, and helpless "babes, would still have pined in want "and anguish—their unhappy husbands "—their unfortunate fathers, loathing ex- "istence, eked out in noisome prisons; "while their country would be deprived

" of their exertions—of their industry;
" but for thee, thou amiable patriot!—
" thou noble soldier!"

A *mask*, mounted like one of *Baye's troops*, in the *Rehearsal*, on a curious little *hobby-horse*, whose kicks and capers kept all at a distance, next ambled up; " evidently much deranged, and loudly " singing his favourite air from *Judas* " *Maccabeus*—

" O Liberty! Thou choicest treasure;
" Seat of Virtue—source of pleasure;—
" Life without thee knows no blessing,
" No enjoyment worth possessing!"

His label was—" Amiable youth! had " you been better mounted, what a noble " race you might have run!"

Close on the heels of the *hobby-horse* gentleman, a *mask* followed hastily, who,

by his mode of approach, evidently appeared a little confused; and constantly kept his eye fixed on the *mask* that preceded him. He rather snatched with haste, than received, a label; and, eagerly perusing it, observed—" O that he were " with *Belzebub,* so we were but well rid " of him !"

To him succeeded a *mask,* in a sort of military dress, who was stared at with a kind of *hauteur* by the whole company; and affected to repay the compliment with interest. He received his billet with evident symptoms of apprehension, and perused—" D——n! Twice as much would " not have recompensed *me* for the cursed " *scowls* and *scoffs* of two such houses!"

With long coach-whip in hand, a large round hat, and white box-coat, with *two-and-thirty capes*—the pockets well stored

with thongs and whip-cord, a *mask*, which seemed as if he had stopped at every ale-house between *Salt-Hill* and *town*, staggered—*bang-up*—to the recess; and took his label. He looked, and started: 'twas —"To our trusty and well-beloved"—an exact copy of a writ! but, in the person's haste, to thrust it—*bang-up*—into his pocket, we could only distinguish the names of *John Doe and Richard Roe.*

Close on the artificial coachman's heels, with frantic step, oft whispering to himself, but audibly—"By Heaven she'll "bilk me!—Whom does she look at "now?"—the pockets on one side turned inside out, the other nearly empty; a youthful *mask*, of meagre form, advanced. He caught the label, with a trembling hand, and, whispering, read, shaking his head at every second word—"O that "men, of heart and understanding truly

"amiable, shutting their eyes on danger, "will madly commit themselves to the "cutting sarcasms of a scrutinizing world, "by fostering *Dalilahs notorious*, though "sure of being shorn!"

To the love-lorn, or rather *love-shorn*, *mask*—at full speed, crying—"I'll take "*five* hundred to *three*, that the Duke of "G——'s *Atalanta* don't win the match "at the next Newmarket Meeting!" Sir William Vacant *gallopped* up to the recess. He got his label: 'twas—"Do but "thy recollection jog, and thou will soon "remember, that, to woo a lady of re-"fined sentiment, successfully, somewhat "more may be requisite than mere at-"tendance."

The earl, as a Highland chief, followed next, most stately. His label was—"How "sweet, yet indiscribable to some, is the

"pleasure resulting from the performance "of a generous action, without an eye "to self!"

At length our lovely *ballad-singers* approached, and gazing wistfully at the casket, sang the beautiful duet—"The "bird in yonder cage confined," with equal taste and expression. Lady Harriett received her scroll the first—it was a *scroll*, indeed! she saw—"Beware, fair "lady!—Trust not thy fortitude too far! "—Relinquish vain pursuits! and, like "the fox, making a virtue of necessity, "sing—O the grapes, how sour!"

When Eliza received her billet, she fancied that she could perceive a smile of more than common complacency on the countenance of the amiable duchess; so ventured to anticipate some favourable intelligence from her scroll. Alas! 'twas

equally disagreeable, yet more perplexing! It was—"I know thee not, and yet I see "thee still.—Come, let me clutch thee!"

At that instant, the ringing of a bell, in all the avenues to the rooms, announced *supper* to be served up. The confusion of *Babel* must have been trifling when compared to the consternation of the company, on recollecting that they had seen nothing even like *cloth-laying* in any of the apartments!—"*Where* is the supper ready?—Who has seen a cloth laid? "—How can we all be accommodated? "—How many can sup at a time?—Who "and who are to sup together?" And—"what party is to sup first?"—were so bandied about from full *twelve hundred* mouths, in various keys and tones, from the soft *piano* to the stentorian *fortissimo*, that, to conceive an idea of a mightier *chaos* of vocal discord is impossible. Yet,

as we sometimes see the thundering tempest, which, with clashing peals and furious blasts, threatens annihilation to all around, lulled, in few minutes, into peaceful murmurs; and the sky become all placid and serene, with only, now and then, a soothing breeze gently waving the adjacent groves; even so it happened, when a *watchman*, claiming attention with his noisy *rattle*, cried—" Past two o'clock, " and the supper all ready in the garden!"

CHAPTER X.

GODS! HOW MANY PEOPLE, IN ALMOST EVERY NATION ON THE GLOBE, ARE EMPLOYED TO FURNISH SUCH A BOARD!

ON approaching the garden the thronging groupes were fixed with mute astonishment at beholding the bowling-green covered with tables of equal length, all regularly arranged, and sheltered by large awnings, in case of a shower—all most splendidly illuminated, and profusely covered with the varied luxuries of various climes! And, so studious of accommodation had the amiable hostess been, that

there were still some chairs unoccupied, though all the company were seated! At that instant the murmurs of applause—the aspirations of satisfaction—the jingling of knives, forks, and plates; and the infinitude of requests from twelve hundred humble and eager petitioners, for an early supply from tempting dishes, would have yielded a fund of entertainment to the bye standers; could they have divested themselves of all desire to partake of the luxurious viands.

By the expiration of the hour, toasts had rapidly passed round; and several excellent songs had helped to exhilerate the *motley masse*, after their luscious fare. When—"Past three o'clock!"—loudly called by the watchman, seemed the preconcerted signal for various bands of *Pandean Minstrels* calling the blythesome parties to the merry dance; and, in ten

minutes, the green was cleared as by enchantment; and the chairs and tables loaded with wines and fruit, placed in recesses; where those who did not choose to dance, might regale themselves; and, at their leisure, observe the varied attitudes of those who did. Bands of music were also placed in several of the rooms, for the entertaiment of those who were fearful of encountering the night-air in the gardens. But, as the splendor of the great room surpassed by far any thing of the kind ever seen before, few occupied the rest; so that those apartments were found peculiarly convenient to indulge in the soft whisper, or in social converse.

Among the wanderers were the Earl of Hankering, Sir William Vacant, and Miss O'Mara. Lady Harriett preferred a dance, and was taken out by the truly elegant *Squire Hawthorn.*

After a short excursion the earl joined the *eastern prince,* who had paid so much attention to the beautiful repertory of her grace's enigmas, and drew off into another room; while the baronet and Eliza sauntered about, laughing at the anticks of several grotesque and very comic characters; among which the *bang-up coachman* cut a conspicuous figure; and frequently reeled very close to them.

Some little altercation happening to take place between a *harlequin* and a *lucifer,* Eliza stopped to observe it; when a brother *jockey* passing by, offering to take the odds on the match of the famous *filley,* at the Newmarket Meeting, Sir William instantly forgot his companion, and gallopped off to make a bet with him; while the *coachman* occupied the baronet's place by the side of the lady, and *sans ceremonie* placed one of his hands round

her waist. Such a freedom soon roused the attention of Eliza; who, missing Sir William, hastened eagerly after him; but happening to miss the door which opened into the avenue leading to the great-room, she threadled a suit of apartments—to the last; where, to her great mortification, she found no other out-let but at the door she had entered! Here the *bang-up gentleman*, no doubt, fancying it convenient to think that he was on the *stand* in Piccadilly, and that the lovely *ballad-singer* had been charming the inhabitants near Burlington-House with her melody, swore he would have a *kiss* and a *song*; and instantly attempted to carry the former part of his threat into execution. Eliza, unused to such cavalier treatment, gave a loud shriek; crying—"Good "Heavens! is no one near to protect me "from such insults?"

"Yes!" answered a voice; (while the heels of the coachman flew *bang-up* where his head should have been)—"And his "greatest bliss on earth would be ever to "protect the divine Miss O'Mara."

Eliza looked, and saw *Prince Pittimana!* She fancied that she had somewhere heard a voice much like the prince's. She felt herself under great obligations for his kind and critical assistance; and made the best acknowledgements that the alarmed state of her spirits would suffer her to recollect.

"Charming Miss O'Mara," said her deliverer—"I saw Sir William leave you "abruptly; also observed the impious "freedom of the *coachman*; and, consci-"ous that you were a stranger to the "house, by seeking your friends through "those private apartments, I determined

"to observe you, and to protect you at "the hazard of my life, if necessary—for "what is my life when placed in competition with rendering you the smallest "service! There, Madam; there is the "great room:—and yonder I see Sir "William Vacant. May angels ever "hover round and guard you!"

Eliza felt a glowing suffusion on receiving the pressure of the prince's hand, at the conclusion of his ejaculation; and blessed the first inventor of masks. She quickened her steps towards Sir William; and was previously met by the earl, who had really felt uneasy at the baronet having lost sight of his *charge*. The incensed beauty immediately disclosed her rencounter with the rude *coachman;* and concluded with saying—"This, my lord, "is the noble gentleman who so gallantly "—good Heavens, he's gone!" she cried.

And, sure enough, they saw no more of him that evening; nor of the *coachman* neither: though, when joined by Sir William, they took several turns in search of both; or, rather, the gentlemen in search of the *coachman;* and the lady in search of the noble person who had so gallantly rescued her from the other's rude and indecorous grasp.

That Eliza had heard a voice much like her protector's, in various of its tones, she was confident; and that she not only thought his person most prepossessing, but felt his impressive words thrill through her very heart, were but too evident. She, therefore, with her usual prudence, endeavoured to reconcile herself to the fruitless search, by mentally acknowledging, that, as his rank was, most probably, what she could not aspire to; and his speech might have owed its tender and

impressive impulse to the circling glass; a further conversation could yield but little hope of pleasure more than momentary, and might inflict many hours of pain. She then cast her eyes about the more eagerly, in search of her *two theatrical friends*, neither of which had hitherto thought proper to speak to any of the party. A few words from *Juba*, she thought, might tend to eradicate those impressions which she had just experienced:—even the cynical remarks of *Cato* would divert, if not instruct and serve her. They certainly possessed a great advantage; as, if they thought proper, they might easily remain concealed from the party, while both herself and Lady Harriett, were known to them, in consequence of her ladyship having told them what characters she and her friend would assume. Therefore, flurried by the presumptuous conduct of the *coachman*—

soothed too much by the impressive declaration of the noble stranger—and disappointed in all their researches, Eliza began, with some degree of anxiety, to anticipate the moment when she would be ushered to the carriage, and conveyed from scenes which, on the whole experience of the evening, she had found much more splendid than satisfactory.

On the other hand, Lady Harriett, with such a partner as her *Squire Hawthorn* to lead her down the merry dance, was much too agreeably employed to perceive the hours glide away. She, certainly, had scrutinized those masks which came in her way, and with as little success as Eliza; but the satisfaction which she experienced, while dancing, and in conversing with her partner, while not dancing, was a convincing proof that the presence of those *theatrical friends* was

not so essential to her happiness as she had frequently imagined; but that her ideas in that respect had been stimulated more by fancy than feeling. At length, at the hour of six, the dancing ended; the music ceased; and the company retired; little less fatigued with pleasure, than overflowing with grateful effusions at the truly magnificent and profusive entertainment of the amiable and hospitable duchess.

CHAPTER XI.

IF THERE WERE NO BITTERS TO THE SWEETS OF THE AFFLUENT, THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE STATE OF THE RICH AND THE POOR WOULD BE INTOLERABLE.

AS Somnus seemed determined to be no longer trifled with, and had frequently hinted his displeasure at the want of respect to his influence, by affecting the ladies with frequent hysterical contortions of countenance, to the no small diversion of the *busy-bodies* who were pursuing their early avocations; the gentlemen were not even asked to sit down at Grosvenor

Square; but, telling them that they ought to be sent to the watch-house for keeping such disorderly hours, and advising them to be good boys, and make haste home, the ladies actually left them in the hall, and ran laughing to their chamber; where each, in a few minutes, so amply atoned for her recent and unaccustomed defection to the drowsy god, that it was not until informed, to their astonishment, of it being two o'clock, that they could again shake him from their presence; when hastening down stairs, they took some chocolate, and resolved on a walk in the park; in order to bring themselves to their recollection, and recover an appetite for their dinner.

There our lovely *Inseparables* wandered and conversed on the events of the preceding evening. Lady Harriett spoke in terms of extacy on the superior elegance,

deportment, and politeness, of her partner; so far transcending all the gentlemen present at the masquerade! And was well convinced, that, from his conversation, so truly polite, refined, and impressive, he must have been a person of high distinction; as the character of *Hawthorn* sat but awkwardly, and frequently, for many minutes together, was evidently forgotten.—"It is very odd," said her ladyship, "that he should never "once have unmasked during the whole "of the evening! And yet, I am confident, he must, several times, have "felt himself exceedingly warm. At all "events he is a charming man! and, "whenever I am to dance, or converse, "at a masquerade, with a stranger, may "Fortune recommend me to such a gen-"tleman!"

"Upon my word, Lady Harriet!"

cried Eliza, "I declare it is very fortunate "for the gentleman that Sir William "Vacant did not hear the impressive "manner in which you have commended "him; or, to a certainty, we should have "had horrible denunciation of *slugs and* "*sawpits!* I, too, am in a predicament "somewhat similar, with respect to the "person who so gallantly rescued me "from the fangs of that brute of a *coach-* "*man.* The wretch, to a certainty, ought "to have been tossed in a carpet, by her "grace's servants, for presuming to enter "such a place; or any place, indeed, in "such a situation. Oh! what a contrast, "between such an unruly *monster* and "the divine *Prince Pittimana!*—The "heroic youth, who so gallantly tripped "up the heels of the ruffian; and dis- "dainfully left him to console himself for "the shock of such a fall at his leisure. "How vexatious, that he, too, should

"not have unmasked while in *my* com-
"pany! or, I might, possibly, have
"known to whom I was so infinitely
"obliged; for, I am confident of being
"familiar to a voice, in some measure
"similar to that of the *prince;* if it were
"really his natural voice; and not so
"marked by affectation, with intent to
"remain the more secure from a possibi-
"lity of discovery. Was it not rather
"strange, that he should have left me so
"abruptly, and not have permitted me to
"introduce him, and his generous con-
"duct to Sir William, whom he, him-
"self, pointed out to me at a distance?"

"Why, really, my dear Eliza, you
"seem not less warm in your encomiums
"on your *gallant* than I could possibly
"have been! Though I know not who is
"to denounce *slugs and sawpits* on your
"account. As the gentleman seemed so

"shy of Sir William, and you are con-
"fident that his voice is familiar to you,
"I am half inclined to think he must
"have been some acquaintance of the
"baronets, whom we may have heard
"converse with him in some of our
"walks."

"Probably he may, my lady. And
"yet there seemed to be somewhat too
"much interesting in his voice to be that
"of a mere *en passant* acquaintance; un-
"less his ardent and truly flattering ex-
"pressions, while I was unmasked, by the
"*coachman* having tossed my mask to some
"distance; or my embarrassment, in such
"a situation, should have given it an in-
"terest which it might not actually have
"merited; or, otherwise, would not have
"obtained."

"We have both of us, then, my dear,

"had our share of ardent and truly flat-
"tering expressions, it seems; and, from
"such characters, I do not wonder at the
"effect produced by them, being so much
"more impressive than if uttered by per-
"sons less accomplished. And that they
"must have had no trifling effect on us
"is evident, from neither of us having
"once mentioned; or, probably, even
"thought of, our theatrical friends, *Cato*
"and *Juba*."

"Indeed, my dear Lady Harriett, but
"I have, and frequently; though, I must
"confess, those thoughts were so con-
"fused, that I could give no shape to
"them; so could not express them. It
"is really astonishing, that *Cato* should
"twice have mentioned the masquerade,
"yet not once have spoken to us; nor
"either of them once have shewed them-
"selves in our presence during the whole

"night! I could fancy many things of "those gentlemen, by no means pleasing; "and I do most sincerely hope, that no "accident may have prevented their at-"tendance: as I cannot—will not, think "that they could be present at such an "entertainment, and not have asked our "opinions of it."

They were returning home, about five o'clock, still harping on the absence of *Cato* and *Juba*, from a masquerade so truly superb and magnificent; and amusing themselves with anticipating what apologies would be made for such absence, should they happen to meet at the theatre on the ensuing evening; when, crossing Park Street, *Cato* actually ran against them; and appeared so much confused, as well as so much fatigued with the speed he had exerted, that it was some moments

before he could pronounce any thing—but "Pardon! pardon!"

At length Lady Harriett having asked the gentleman how he had been entertained at the masquerade; he answered—"Very highly, indeed, my lady! But "our pleasure would have been much en-"hanced, could we have met with a fa-"vourable opportunity of requesting the "opinions of *certain ladies*, on such a "scene." (And he bowed most respecfully to both). "We anxiously watched an "opportunity, when we could have seen "you together, late in the evening, and "your minds made up, on the splendid "subject! But an awkward circumstance "had then occurred, which compelled us "to leave the enchanting scene rather "precipitately; and has, in fact, sent my "dear young friend into the country,

"whence, I am apprehensive, he will "not be able to return for several weeks; "and, as I purpose following him this "evening, I cannot easily describe my "chagrin—indeed, the chagrin of us both, "in leaving town while two such esti-"mable ladies remain in it. However, "it will be some satisfaction to us, to "anticipate, with fervent hope, much de-"light in *their* amiable conversation, at "the commencement of the next theatri-"cal season."—And, making the ladies a profound obeisance, he hastened towards Oxford Street as fast as possible.

The consternation and disappointment depicted on the countenances of the lovely friends, at such intelligence, was not triflingly conspicuous. They were silent—they walked and ruminated; and ruminated and walked—far beyond their house! That they had been observed at the mas-

querade was evident, from the confession of *Cato*; and that they were to have been joined by both gentlemen, towards the conclusion of the evening, was equally evident, and not a little consoling.—But what could have occasioned their precipitate departure? They (the ladies) saw no awkward circumstance occur which could have rendered such resolution necessary; as harmony and festivity had uninterruptedly prevailed in every part! Some slight ideas, rather inimical to the moral characters of those gentlemen, glanced harshly across the minds of the ladies; but were instantly expelled with much indignation. It was impossible that men of such education—such address, could be capable of any serious deviation from moral rectitude. And what else could have induced a precipitate departure, not only from a scene so splendid and so hospitable, but even from London itself! What satisfaction could now

be enjoyed at the theatres at so late a period of the season, and deprived of friends so eminently endowed with theatrical knowledge, and so excellently qualified to display that knowledge with equal eloquence and elegance!—

"Bless me!" cried Lady Harriett—"why, this is Bond Street!—We are "out of our senses, surely! What a laugh "we should have against us, if such over-"sight were known at home! Prithee, let "us return, my love! What have we to "do with the theatres? They can present "but little temptation to us, now; al-"most at Midsummer: and, I really "think, the sooner we go and rusticate "ourselves in Yorkshire, the more agree-"able it must be to both.—What say "you?"

"Perfectly so, my lady. Indeed the

"summer is advancing so rapidly, that it "is a kind of reproach to us to remain "longer in the gloomy metropolis!"— Such wonderful influence has the abrupt departure of persons whose company we are partial to, in effecting the rapid advance of summer in the month of May!

CHAPTER XII.

HOW CAUTIOUS MEN SHOULD BE OF COMMITTING THOUGHTS TO PAPER, WHICH, IF KNOWN, MAY TEND TO THEIR RIDICULE, IF NOT THEIR DISGRACE.

IT was near seven o'clock when our ladies sat down to dinner; and, by the time they had done, the Earl of Hankering and Sir William called in, to inquire into the state of their health, after the fatigues of the masquerade. A short conversation was succeeded by a long pool at quadrille; and the party did not rise from supper until it was past midnight; con-

sequently, the ladies were soon compelled to apologize for feeling exceedingly drowsy; and, when retired, seized the opportunity of exercising their imaginations on the subject of *Juba's* precipitate retreat, under the appearance of actually sleeping; so that few opportunities occurred for conversation until breakfast on the following morning; as, at the usual hour of rising, her ladyship's woman had actually to rouse them from their slumbers!

At breakfast, indeed, each cup of tea produced fresh observations on a subject so very astonishing—and so very disagreeble. They sipped and sipped, and talked and talked; until they had taken two or three more cups than usual; when they began to complain of the tea-dealer, for sending them an article so very indifferent! Nor are we certain that their resentment might not have extended so far, as posi-

tively to have deprived the person of their custom, had not their *choler* been diverted from the exhausted *hyson*, by the arrival of the newspapers.—The tea and the grocer instantly vanished from their minds, while the one seized the *Post*, and the other the *Chronicle*, crying—"Now for "the masquerade!"

After perusing, very heedfully, for nearly a quarter of an hour, Miss O'Mara said—"Bless me, Lady Harriett, what a string "of debates! and scarcely any thing of "the masquerade at all; except a para-"graph, by which it appears, that there "were more rude persons at that enter-"tainment than my brutal *coachman*—"as a duel, it seems, has taken place "between a *Marquis of Montresor*, and "*Sir Yep Flankem*, in consequence of "some misconduct in the latter to a lady, "who was absolutely thrown into *hysterics*

" by his violent behaviour. But I see " not a tittle of *my* affair, though I have " examined the paper very attentively."

" Nor I either, my dear; which I am " not a little surprised at. However, " that there has been a very serious affair, " in consequence of some misconduct, is " evident; therefore, I will exchange " papers with you, if you please; as you " will here find some letters well worth " perusing, and the duel related in style."

Eliza gladly made the exchange, and soon found her attention warmly interested by the following curious narrative of a rencountre, which was making no little noise in the polite circles; nor a jot less among the heroes of the *whip*.

" We are happy to have it in our power

"(exclusively) to oblige our readers with "a circumstantial account of the *duel* "which took place yesterday about eleven "o'clock, on Fair-Mile, near Cobham, in "the county of Surrey.

"A serious *fricas* took place, it seems, "at the Duchess of Centlivre's most "splendid masquerade, between the Mar-"quis of Montresor and Sir Yep Flankem, "relative to the rude conduct of the latter "to some young lady, whose name has "not yet transpired—Sir Yep, indeed, "bore evident signs of having been han-"dled rather roughly; as the white *box-"coat,* in which he had personated a "*coachman* of *ton*—actually representing "himself, exhibited several crimson stripes "down the back of the capes, which ex-"cited much curiosity, and risibility, too, "while he entered his carriage.

"It was four o'clock when the baronet "retired, more full of choler than of "sleep: he therefore, had, no necessity "to call for candles to enable him to pen "a challenge. He sat himself down in "his study the moment he had washed "his head with a little brandy; and, feel- "ing much pain, as well as conceiving "himself the most injured man on earth, "he, after some little consideration, pen- "ned the following awful and soul-daunt- "ing *billet-deux!*"

'Letter from *Sir Yep Flankem* to the
'*Marquis de Montresor*.'

'My Lord,

'As none but a giddy *flirt*, 'as wild as one of *Lord Flurry's* prancing '*leaders*, would have ventured, by herself, 'into so obscure an apartment as that into 'which I followed her; so none, but a

'fellow as spiteful as one of *Sir Phelim's* 'restive *rigs*, would have ever thought 'of resenting a little flirtation with one, 'who, to a certainty, did not belong to 'you; (nor, can I find out, whether or 'not she belongs to any body at all); 'especially, when you might easily have 'seen, if you could have carried your '*eyes* as far as the *ears* of your *wheel-* '*horses*, that I had too much *stowage* 'on the *roof* of my *carriage*. And, to 'kick up a gentleman's heels, who could 'n't stand firmer upon his *pins* than any 'of *Sir Ricketty's* spavined *bays*, was a 'trick, which, any one must conclude, 'was d——d r——y! It caused blood to 'flow from my head; and *blood will have* '*blood!* as the play-bills say.—And, de- 'pend upon't, your blood shall run down 'the capes of your coat—aye, and your 'waistcoat too! None of your *shilly-* '*shally* works, my lord, like *fidgetting*

'*fillies*, when first saddled!—Nothing
'can appease my just vengeance but
'blood: and I will make it flow as rapidly
'as the *stream* from a horse's *neck-vein*,
'when struck hard, and the *fleme* too
'large by half! I must insist on *fowling-*
'*pieces*, with a *brace of balls* in each;
'and the distance not to exceed *five yards*,
'that I may make as sure of my mark as
'if driving with four-in-hand, over the
'*head of a pin*, at only twelve miles an
'hour!—No *seconds*, my lord!—A car-
'riage always travels lightest when empty,
'so we shall get to the end of our *stage*
'the sooner; and we have a good pre-
'cedent. However, as to that, my lord,
'if you have a desire for any body to
'hear your *last speech*, why, I sha'n't
'*spoil sport* for such a trifle as that;
'and it is quite a matter of indifference
'to me who they may be, that are to
'cry *the last dying-speech* of such a

'*kicking-horse* as you; or a *horse* so much
'abused as—

'My Lord,
'Your most obedient servant,
'*Yep Flankem.*

5th May, 6 o'clock A. M.

'P. S. That we may lose no time, I 'shall expect your lordship on Fair-Mill, 'at eleven. I have sent this by my friend, 'Colonel Cox, who will soon convince 'your lordship, that I am in downright 'earnest; and that, if you are not punc- 'tual to your time, you will shew a *white* '*feather*, and may get an *ugly cut* when 'you little expect it.'

"As the marquis was not awakened so "soon after retiring to rest, without much "difficulty, he begged he might not de- "tain Colonel Cox a moment; assuring "him that he would write an answer so

" soon as possible: and, rising immedi-
" ately for that purpose, he dispatched
" his valet for his friend; while he was
" writing the following answer."

'Letter from the *Marquis of Montresor*
'to *Sir Yep Flankem*, Bart.

'Sir,

'Not having left Centlivre-House
'until very near five o'clock, it is not
'much to be wondered at that your angry
'epistle did not very easily rouse me from
'my slumbers.

'When I assure you, Sir Yep, that
'my intention was not, by any means, to
'elicit those sanguinary drops which have
'provoked such deadly denunciations
'against me, I trust you will not attri-
'bute such assertions to any apprehensions
'of the dangers that may await me. Your

'brutal conduct to an amiable young lady, 'not only roused me to rescue her, but to 'resent the injured hospitality of our most 'munificent *hostess*; and those united 'feelings might have created a more forci- 'ble impulse than I was aware of.

'As to your *fowling-pieces—distance—* '*no seconds—precedent*, &c. the whole, 'I must be permitted to say, is a farrago 'of bombastical nonsense, truly laugh- 'able. However, that I may not disap- 'point you in wreaking the vengeance 'which you seem so determined to enjoy, I 'am resolved to accommodate you in every 'point, which you, your friend, and my 'friend (*Major M'Callaghan*), may deem 'decently requisite.—Confident that I can 'labour under no very material disadvan- 'tage; unless they should happen to or- 'dain that we, by turns, should lie on 'the ground, to be driven over, with *four-*

'*in-hand*, at the rate of twelve miles an
'hour! And then, I will candidly con-
'fess, I think you will have the *whip-*
'*hand* of me.

'I am,

'Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

'*Montresor.*

'5*th May*, 7 *o'clock*, *A. M.*'

"On perusing the letter of the marquis,
"delivered by Major M'Callaghan, in the
"presence of Colonel Cox, Sir Yep Flank-
"em flew into a violent passion; crying—
'Blood! Blood! Blood! D—n it! This
'is too bad! May I never handsomely
'touch the flank of a *near-leader* again,
'if I wou'dn't rather have lost a *fore-*
'*wheel*, when driving for five hundred,
'than the marquis should carry the mat-
'ter off so coolly! But, d—n me, I'll
'do him! At only five yards distance, I

'could as soon miss setting my foot on 'the *nave of the wheel* when mounting 'my box."

'Upon my conscience,' cried the major, 'but there is no little difficulty in guard-'ing against accidents in such cases! 'And if one ball shall happen to pass on 'one side of the head, and the other *whiz* 'by the opposite, it would be a devil of a 'mortification both to you and the mar-'quis; I would, therefore, venture to re-'commend to Colonel Cox, that the '*fowling-pieces* be laid aside, and that '*blunderbusses*, with *nine balls* in each, 'be substituted in lieu of them, at only '*four yards* distance—or, *pistols* at—'*twelve!*'

'Hey! O no, major, that will never 'do! That would be downright murder; 'for by the great *Jehu!* I should blow

'the marquis all to pieces; and he would 'have no chance at all—if he gave me the 'first fire out of compliment, because he 'is the aggressor; or, that I should win 'it by tossing up a guinea—or his blun- 'derbuss should happen to miss fire—or 'to *flash in the pan!*'

'There, Sir Yep, I must beg leave to 'enter my caveat,' said the colonel—'as 'in an affair of so very serious a nature, I 'presume, Major M'Callaghan, as well 'as myself, would be for precluding all 'tossing for *first fires*, by both firing at a 'given signal.'

'Fire together!—Given signal do you 'say!—Then nobody will escape! and 'we shall both of us be as dead as *horses* 'shot through the chest for being unser- 'viceable. No, no, gentlemen! I think 'we had better stick to the pistols, at

'twelve yards distance; especially as the 'young marquis may feel a little *shy* of 'coming to close quarters. Not but I 'should like the other mode best, I must 'confess; for I am determined that one 'of us shall fall.—Yes, yes; *blood must* '*have blood!—One of us must fall!*'

'Then, Sir Yep, that there may be no 'possible chance of missing, I am autho-'rised to say, that the marquis will take 'a pistol in one hand, and the *corner of* '*your handkerchief* in the other.'

'Lord J—s! Why, what a bloody-'minded fellow the marquis must be, if 'he is really in earnest! But, after all, 'perhaps, he would like the seconds to 'interfere, and bring about a reconcilia-'tion.'

'But where can we find a precedent

'for that, Sir Yep—and after such a 'challenge, too!'

'True, colonel,' replied the major—'there can be no precedent of such kind, 'I think; unless a *cane* were to be ad-'ministered by previous agreement.—No, 'no! I really think the best possible mode, 'will be *pistols* and a *handkerchief*.'

'If such be the mode adopted,' said Colonel Cox—'I must beg leave to excuse 'myself from attending my friend to the 'ground.—It is horrible!'

'There! There, major! you hear what 'my friend says. I, *certainly*, should be 'very glad to accommodate the marquis 'in so murderous a plan; but, lord, I 'might as well look for a *new wheel* in a '*chalk-pit*, as to think of finding a *second* 'upon such terms.—So let us stick to the

'*pistols* at *twelve yards*: and I'll order
'the *barouche* directly—as I should like
'to call on *Fanny*, at Isleworth, first.'.

"Matters being so arranged, at three
"minutes past eleven the Marquis of
"Montresor arrived on Fair-Mill, followed
"by Sir Yep Flankem, driving his own
"*barouche* at a much greater rate than
"twelve miles an hour—little short of full
"speed!

"After the marquis, with his accus-
"tomed politeness, had entreated Sir Yep
"to accommodate himself, by taking his
"own distance; and Sir Yep had replied,
"that he thought it would be *best* to take
"the distance insisted on by the seconds;
"the parties fired, per signal, when Sir
"Yep exclaimed—'O lord! O lord! I'm
"wounded in the *whip-arm*!—I can't
"move it!—Kick me if ever I shall be

" able to *drive four-in-hand* again as long
" as I live!—I can't fire at a *mark* with
" my left hand, you know; so, I suppose,
" I must be satisfied; and we must all be
" friends again.—Though you certainly
" gave me a confounded ugly tumble, my
" lord—that you will allow!"

" The marquis readily made the same
" apology for his *forcible impulse*, as in
" the morning, when answering the chal-
" lenge; and the parties returned to
" Esher in the barouche;—driven mode-
" rately by his coachman: but, on dres-
" sing the wound, the surgeons, fancying
" they perceived some serious symptoms,
" from a bad habit of body, thought it
" prudent to advise the marquis to remain
" *incog*, until the issue of the affair could
" be more minutely ascertained. There-
" fore the marquis returned to town im-
" mediately, and has not been visible
" since.

"It is rather curious that the gallant "attack which gave rise to the above "duel, should have been no less than the "third of the kind in the course of the "evening; though the baronet was lucky "enough to escape a *confounded tumble* "for the others; or did not think proper "to resent them: nor has the slightest "knowledge been obtained of the names of "any of the ladies. When our dashing "*drivers* deign to honour a *ten* or *twenty* "*shilling* masquerade with their company, "as *rocky* as their carriages on an uneven "road; the abrupt seizure of a female "*mask* may not be deemed conduct wholly "unpardonable; because the *ladies* who "frequent those places are not easily of-"fended—at being *caught at;* but, when "another masquerade of splendor and "magnificence shall be given by some "munificent duchess, we sincerely hope "that those gentlemen will condescend to

"recollect, that, where ladies of quality "and virtue are invited to grace an entainment, there, no doubt, will always "be gentlemen, alert as the Marquis of "Montresor, to protect them; consequently, a trifling memorandum—*to go* "*tolerably sober*, may be not less prudent "than polite."

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW MATERIALLY ARE THE INDUCEMENTS TO VISIT A THEATRE, DIMINISHED, WHEN THE PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS HAVE WITHDRAWN THEMSELVES!

As the paragraph in the *Chronicle* positively asserted that the lady had fallen into hysterics; and Eliza knew very well that she had not fallen into hysterics; so she was convinced that the gallant Marquis of Montresor could not have fought the duel, which was likely to be attended with such serious consequences, on her account; or she would have been equally

wretched and alarmed; for she still remembered the peculiarity of his voice, as well as the words which he uttered. And to be the subject of a duel, was a circumstance which she had so frequently deprecated, that she repeatedly perused the paragraph in the *Post*, which asserted the ignorance of the town, as to the names of the ladies, with peculiar satisfaction; and blessed her lucky stars for so very fortunate an escape! On the contrary, Lady Harriett, whose nerves would admit of a greater power of tension, seemed to enjoy the frolic; and would not have been offended in the least, to have been felicitated on such a very serious event—even in the middle of Bond Street.—So much was she incensed at the repeated *faux-paux* of the unruly champion for *four-in-hand* celebrity.

Still the precipitate departure of *Juba*,

and the eagerness of *Cato* to follow him, were not less themes for astonishment and anxiety to both ladies. He, certainly, could not have been concerned in any duel; for there was not the slightest intelligence of any other affair of the kind having taken place in either paper: and it was impossible that he should have been a party in the one described, because, in the first place, it was not likely that those gentlemen would have put themselves to such immense expense for *dresses* and *turbans*: and, in the next, the voice of *Prince Pittimana* bore not the least resemblance to that of *Juba*.—'Twas strange! And the more they exerted their invention, the more they found themselves perplexed. Therefore, as the town-season was so far advanced; and as there was a probability that those gentlemen might visit some of the watering-places, they had better leave town, even before the *birth-day*!—And,

after enjoying a little *agreeable solitude* at Lady Harriett's beautiful cottage, near Doncaster, invite the Earl and Sir William to give them a meeting at York; when they would make a tour to Scarborough, Harrowgate, Buxton, and Cheltenham, so as to be in London early, that thay might attend the theatres on their opening; as, no doubt, by that time, Sir Yep would have recovered, and all have blown over.

Having thus made up their minds, our fair *Inseparables* felt little less anxious to carry their plan into execution, than they had been to procure tickets for the masquerade. Indeed, we have great reason to believe, that the ultimate objects were the same. However, be them what they might, they were so efficient as to eject the ladies from Grosvenor Square early in the morning of the twenty-ninth day of

May; and, on the first day of June, they arrived at the cottage.

The morning after their arrival, each being equally anxious for such a regale, the ladies took a ramble in the *grove*, and enjoyed the solitude extremely. The following day, *Juba's* hasty departure was again the topic of long conversation; and, on the third, in consequence of Eliza happening to start the possibility of Sir Yep being already declared out of danger; and that their *friends* might return to town, in order to pay their respects at court, on the *birth-day*; and Lady Harriett fancying, that, had she gone to court, she might have been honoured with a moment's conversation with her elegant *Squire Hawthorn*.—So fancying, and so starting possibilities, they began to *fancy* solitude not quite so enviable as they had conceived on their arrival, and would have

been content to have remained in Grosvenor Square until Midsummer.

It was the wise maxim of wise mamas, even previous to the last century, when they happened to have a love-stricken daughter in the family, to hurry her into a variety of company; that, by seeing *many* agreeable persons, she might be enabled to forget one. The idea was not radically defective; as was evident, from the successful issue of many experiments; it was only not carried quite far enough. When the daughters had let 'Concealment, 'like a worm i'th' bud, prey on their damask 'cheek,' the merely seeing variety seldom succeeded. In such cases they should have endeavoured to make them *think* of several, in order to expel the *one*; which, when duly prescribed by the mothers, and as duly attended to by the daughters, is, we believe, a recipe most infallible! In

fact, except the want of *mamas*, we have an instance of each before us. Miss O'Mara, who was stricken through the heart, by the fine eyes and graceful deportment of *Juba*, saw variety without effect; because she had no mother to direct her attention to others, and no inclination to direct her own. Therefore did she let "Concealment, like a worm "i'th' bud, prey on her damask cheek."

But lady Harriett, who was little less stricken, by the same formidable *apparatus*, not only *saw* a variety of other gentlemen, but *thought* a little of them, too! The truly inimitable deportment, and refined conversation, of her Squire Hawthorn, had soothed her ladyship's esteem before she was informed of the identity of the gentleman who represented that character; and, when she did know, it soothed her vanity also, every time she

recollected some of his expressions.—But, to think of him seriously, when known, was out of the question; therefore, all the portion of admiration which had been subtracted from the sum total, yielded by her to *Juba*, and which was now again to be withdrawn from her *Squire Hawthorn*, did not seem inclined to return to the original possessor; but stole, by degrees, into the custody of Sir William Vacant; who, consequently, was not a little obliged to the gentleman for causing such defections; though profoundly inconscious of a tender thought having strayed to any one. Nor did Eliza reflect on the change with less astonishment than satisfaction, when she was frequently the witness of audible wishes, sometimes that the Earl and Sir William, and sometimes that Sir William, (without the earl being mentioned at all), were in the country, to make up a party.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT INEFFABLE DELIGHT MUST IT YIELD TO THE HEART, TO BE PRESERVED FROM MOST IMMINENT DANGER BY THE PERSON WHOM WE MOST ESTEEM; AND HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE HIM FAR DISTANT AT SUCH JUNCTURE!

THUS time glided heavily by, though almost every day was attempted to be hurried by attending the assemblies round the neighbourhood; and frequently all the theatres near them. Still Eliza could see none equal to *Juba;* nor could Lady Harriett see any equal to *Juba,* either; or nearly equal to her Squire

Hawthorn; or scarcely superior to Sir William—whose *good-nature would certainly atone for many trifling personal imperfections!*—Thus, we repeat, time glided on, and the ladies had entered the sixth week of their departure from town; when, after making a visit to a family near Wakefield, they were pursuing their *route* to Sheffield, in order to be present at a concert, for the benefit of a distressed widow; and being unwilling to derange the economy of their particular friend, a clergyman, with a large family, and a small house, had sent the footman forward to procure comfortable apartments in some private house—not wishing to take up their abode in a hotel or an inn. About a quarter of a mile before they reached Bank-Top, the horse, which the coachman rode, happening to make a great stumble, one of the stirrups broke, and the man fell off! The poor animal ex-

pecting, as is customary in those cases, to be punished for the accident, plunged forward, and set off on the gallop, before the coachman, who was rising from the ground but very little hurt, could catch hold of the bridle. The ladies, who knew the road, and the dreadful declivity so very near them, ejaculated a hasty prayer to Heaven, for mercy and relief; and, very wisely, dropped on their knees in the bottom of the carriage.—Most providentially, two gentlemen, no other than *Cato* and *Juba!* were looking about them at the door of the inn; who, seeing a carriage come so precipitately, and, without a driver; also perceiving the head of a lady, instantly determined to attempt stopping the horses before they reached the brink of the hill. *Juba* caught hold of a pitch-fork, resolved, if he could not stop the animals, to kill one on the spot; as more preferable than risking the lives

of ladies, whoever they might be. But *Cato*, more experienced, and less agitated than the youth, seeing a post-chaise stand immediately before him, belonging to the inn, and just returned from Sheffield, took the squats from the hind-wheels; when the chaise, running backwards to the wall, completely stopped the road! The horses, soon perceiving the obstruction, checked themselves some yards distance from it; and, seized by *Juba*, were happily stopped without doing any mischief.

The youth, pleased with his success, ran to the door of the carriage, and received—Lady Harriett in his arms! who fervently thanked him for his most critical relief. Not so Eliza! The sudden transition from terror in the extreme, to somewhat very like transport, was too much for her nerves to sustain; and she had

actually fainted. *Juba*, therefore, gently pulled her towards him; and, taking her in his arms, conveyed his precious burthen into a large parlour; while *Cato*, leading Lady Harriett, immediately followed. Proper restoratives being applied, Miss O'Mara was recovered in a few minutes.

Just as Eliza had recovered her recollection, her ladyship, attended by *Cato*, had run to the door, to inform a neighbouring gentleman, whom she saw riding up the hill, of the providential escape which they had just experienced.—At that moment, heaving an impressive sigh, and casting her eyes on the admiring *Juba*, Eliza said—"O, Sir! how shall I be able "to express my thanks for your gallant "and most inestimable relief!"

"Dearest Miss O'Mara!" returned

Juba—"think not of it. I would have "done as much for any fellow creature— "but, ah, madam! what would I not un-"dertake to insure your safety and pro-"mote your happiness!—O time! time! "Fly swift ye hours! and, in *ten months*, "I shall be at liberty to express what now "I feel."—Then taking up her hand, he kissed it—bowed—and joined the party at the door.

The astonished beauty moved to the window—gasping for air; so much was her heart over-fraught with what she had experienced; and what she had still more recently heard from the lips of *Juba*. In kissing her hand the youth had dropped a tear of ineffable satisfactlon on it. She looked on her hand, and was going to wipe it; but, recollecting herself, she said—"No! he has saved my life, and "the life of my dear friend.—Let the

"*Zephyrs* regale themselves!"—Then, sighing, she proceeded towards the door; but feeling the approach of suffusion, she returned—looked through the window, and shed some tears; so, by the time the company returned, she felt much relieved, and could receive them without evincing particular embarrassment.

As the gentleman, whom Lady Harriett had been informing of the miraculous escape of herself and friend, was a mere *rattle*, instead of felicitating the ladies on the dangers they had escaped, he rallied them on the *grand gallop* which they had escaped down one of the steepest hills in the county; and the rapid progress which they would have made towards Sheffield: but though such *rattling* did not, by any means, impress the company with a favourable opinion of his fine feelings; they certainly were much in favour of Eliza:

for, by forcing a laugh, in compliment of the gentleman's *wit*, she became able to bear the sideling glances of *Juba* with tolerable composure; and *he*, already fearful of having offended, did not dare indulge a full gaze, lest he should meet her frown.

The coachman having arrived, with no other injury than a slight bruise of a foot, which somewhat retarded his progress; and the horses having been baited at Barnsby, *Cato*, fearful that they might prove timid during the day, advised that the man should proceed onward with the poor alarmed animals, and the ladies pursue their journey with four post-horses. The poor fellow, therefore, highly rejoiced at the safety of his ladies, set forward with his cattle: but the post-horses being to come from Barnley; as there was only a pair at Bank-top, and those

had just come off a journey; it was nearly half an hour before the ladies could proceed. However, what with a profusion of compliments from their theatrical friends; as many grateful effusions from Lady Harriett; and more rattling speeches from the stranger than from either, the carriage was announced before it was expected —when the ladies were handed to it by their old friends; Lady Harriett still thanking them every step; and Eliza pleading some remains of faintness, as an apology for feeling much more than she could express—or wished any of the party to conceive.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT A RAPID PROGRESS WILL THE MISFORTUNES OF ESTEEMED FRIENDS MAKE IN SOME HEARTS!

"HEAVENS! What a dreadful decli-
"vity this is, to be driven down even
"with care: what then must it appear if
"rattled down at full speed, by terrified
"horses, and without a driver!" said Lady Harriet, when they had got some few yards down the hill; and could plainly perceive the danger they had escaped.

"Indeed it is, my dear Lady Harriett!

"and our obligations to our preservers, "are, of course, the greater."—Thus ended the first effort of our ladies to support a conversation; and, except a very few questions, of—"How do you feel "yourself now, my dear?"—and, "Some-"what better, I thank you, my dear"—a silence ensued until they came to Chaple-Town. Her ladyship then said—"It is "very unfortunate, my dear, and not a little "strange, that of all our acquaintances, "who have seen *Cato* and *Juba*, when "in our company, not one of them "should have known the name of either! "—Is it not very curious?"

"I, my dear lady, have actually en-"tertained the same thought no less than "twice since we left Bank-Top. It is "evident they cannot be residents in this "neighbourhood; or Mr. Lambert, who "has told us five hundred times, that

" there is not a hill or dale in the county " which he does not hunt over, and " shoot through; must, to a certainty, " have met with them, in his rides or his " walks."

" They are not known at the Bank-Top " Inn, Eliza; for I had the curiosity to " ask the chamber-maid.—She told me " they were total strangers—having ar- " rived not more than a quarter of an " hour before they so essentially assisted " us."

" Good Heaven! they seem to me, " Lady Harriett, to have been conducted " thither by Providence, merely as the " instruments of our preservation!"

" And yet, Eliza, I could not help " fancying that *Juba* did not seem so " much rejoiced at the good he had ef-

"fected, as young men generally appear "to be on such occasions; especially if "the ladies preserved are worth looking "at. For my part I am glad the day is "so near when my brother and Sir Wil-"liam are to arr've; as I really should "not like to venture another tour, on such "hilly roads, without gentlemen to pro-"tect us, in case of accident, or meeting "disagreeable company."

"I should imagine they must be wan-"dering on the road already, by your "ladyship not having received a letter "from either for the last three days."

"I should not wonder if they were, "my dear: thinking to surprise us most "agreeably, I suppose. Though they "mentioned somewhat about leaving town "on Monday next."

On the arrival of the carriage at Sheffield, the footman, who was waiting their approach, informed the ladies, that he had procured elegant apartments, which would be ready for their reception early in the evening. They, therefore, ordered dinner at the Tontine; and immediately ran up stairs, to adjust themselves a little.

By the time the ladies returned to the parlour, the dinner was served. They ate heartily after their terrific ride, and happy escape—then, like true politicians, they asked for the newspaper. The *Courier* was brought in, and Lady Harriett read it audibly. After the third paragraph, she came to the following—

"We were this morning informed, that
"Sir Yep Flankem, Bart. died yesterday
"evening, about nine o'clock, in conse-
"quence of the wound which he received

"from the Marquis of Montresor, having "*sloughed* out, and rapidly proceeded to "a mortification."—"So much for gen-"tlemen behaving rudely to ladies at "masquerades!" said her ladyship.

"What a happy circumstance it is, that "the gallant Marquis of Montresor is not "*Juba!* And that I am not concerned in "so melancholy an affair"—thought Eliza.

"O Heavens, Eliza!—Order post-"horses, and let us be gone!" said Lady Harriett, handing over the paper, and putting her handkerchief to her face.

"Bless me, Lady Harriett! what can "be the matter?" said Eliza, ringing the bell—when, casting her eye over the paper, she saw—"On Friday last, about "eleven o'clock, as the Earl of Hanker-"ing, and Sir William Vacant, were

" walking up Berkley Square, while cros-
" sing Bruton Street, an over-driven bul-
" lock ran over the baronet; by which
" accident his right arm was broken near
" the shoulder. He was immediately
" taken into Thomas's Hotel, and a sur-
" geon being sent for, the fracture was
" reduced in a few minutes. We are
" happy to say, that no further ill son-
" sequence is likely to attend such acci-
" dent, except confinement for some days
" this hot weather."

" Well, my dear Lady Harriett," said Eliza, " thank Heaven that such an acci-
" dent ended with so little apparent dan-
" ger to life!—Had he been gored—had
" your brother been gored by the furious
" beast, what might then have been the
" consequence !"—The servant entering, Eliza desired him to order post-horses, as they should return home directly :—

and, after a short visit from their friend, the clergyman, who gave her ladyship some spiritual advice, at once consoling and encouraging, the ladies left the concert behind them; and arrived at the cottage before dark.

To the great relief of Lady Harriett, who really felt more for Sir William than she conceived it possible to have entertained so very rapidly, the post had arrived about an hour before them, with a letter from the earl. The accident was recited in much the same manner as in the newspaper; with the addition of a bruise on the side; but, whether by the fall, or by the horn of the beast, could not be clearly ascertained. However, the earl solemnly assured Lady Harriett, that not the least danger was apprehended; though the surgeons seemed to think that it would be six weeks or two months be-

fore it might be prudent for the baronet to attempt a long journey: and as, by that time, the winter theatres would be opening, he thought they had better defer their jaunt to the watering-places till the following summer; unless they chose to undertake it without them, and could make up a party for that purpose in the neighbourhood: in which case they would be sure of the good wishes of him and the baronet following them through the whole of the tour.

Although the letter was highly consolitary to her ladyship; as it relieved her from all apprehensions of danger; yet, to her astonishment, as well as to that of Eliza, she fancied that she should be much easier in her mind, if she were nearer to Sir William! And had very seriously entreated her lovely friend's consent to return to town in a few days;

when, from the united effect of the fright at Bank-Top, and the shock on perusing the paragraph of Sir William Vacant's accident, she, on the following morning, complained of a violent head-ache; and, in the evening, her doctor arriving from Doncaster, found her in a state of fever; from which it was more than a month before she had sufficiently recovered to be permitted to undertake a long journey. Though, much to lessen her anxiety, every letter from the earl, solemnly announced Sir William's rapid amendment: and, by the time her ladyship had acquired sufficient health and spirits to obtain the doctor's *fiat* for travelling, Eliza, who had been the constant attendant at the bed-side of her dear and amiable friend, during the whole of her indisposition, was seized with a similar complaint, but in a more violent degree; which, in spite

of medical assistance, detained them in the country two months longer.

Fortunately, for the peace of mind of both ladies, Sir William had so well recovered, as to be able to write his own letters, some time before Eliza was capable of enduring the fatigue of a long journey; and had actually written for permission to come down, in order to see them safe to London. Her ladyship, however, had an idea that she did not recover her usual healthy appearance so fast as she could wish; and thought that change of air, and easy journeys, might do wonders, both for her and her lovely friend. She, therefore, politely declined such offer, assuring him that, on such a road, and with such careful servants, there could not be the smallest danger. Besides, as they did not mean to travel more than thirty miles

a day, nor at all on Sunday, it would be better, and even more convenient, for them to travel alone. But she had no objection—on the contrary, they should be happy—to see him and the earl, at dinner, at St. Alban's, on that day fortnight.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PLEASURE OF DOING GOOD ACTIONS CANNOT BE WHOLLY ERADICATED, EVEN THOUGH WE FIND THE OBJECTS OF OUR BENEVOLENCE TOTALLY UNWORTHY.

ON leaving the cottage, Lady Harriett, who preferred four post-horses, rather than her own pair which had played her such a trick at Bank-Top, desired the post-boys to drive gently, as she wished to go no more than five miles an hour, all the way to London; and, as the roads were dry, she was pleased to think that such a

rate of travelling would not fatigue the poor cattle.

"God bless your ladyship!" said the master driver, touching his hat—"the "poor beasts will pray for your ladyship "at the end of every stage."

"Upon my word! The poor fellow "speaks very sensibly, and very humanely. "He appears a very decent-looking young "man, too. And I have not a doubt "but he is very careful and tender of his "poor creatures when on the road," said Eliza.

"So they all would, my dear, if they "studied their own interest; especially "when driving ladies. I am sure he will "fare the better for it from us."

Yet, though such were the amiable

opinions of the ladies, and the *lads* were really pleased that their cattle would have an easy stage, all were most egregiously mistaken; for the lads, having been so long in the habit of spurring, whipping, and scampering, through their stage, could not refrain from their usual exercise; so that the poor creatures actually endured a greater portion of torture than if they had been suffered to scamper through the stage in two-thirds of the time thus allotted to them.—But such is the perversion of custom, and the neglect of looking further than the mere surface! The ladies were pleased that the horses had not been compelled to travel so fast as usual—the poor animals were really much more jaded from having been punished longer than usual:—and the *lads*, pleased with the liberality of the ladies, and conscious that their cattle must have had an easy job of it—drank more—stopped oftener—and

rode faster than usual! Therefore, through the fallibility of human ideas, a journey, which, in point of speed, was founded on the sweetest principles of human nature, was the cause of increase of torture to nearly *twenty times four*, poor, harrassed, half-starved, post-horses!

But let not our lovely readers judge us too precipitately; nor condemn us, not only as enemies to *God's* highly-finished animal—the *Horse*, but as abettors of the *helter-skelter tribe* of little more than *half-human* beings, called *men*:—on the contrary, we deem that noble creature one of the *Almighty's* most favourite gifts to man; and dare venture our opinions thus openly, that the wanton abusers of such excellent creatures, will have more to answer for, when giving an account of all their actions to the *Creator of All*, than either they, or their ghostly fathers,

may be aware of. Not a doubt exists in our mind, but the *rapid neck-or-nothing* mail-coach system has caused the premature death, or decrepitude, of more horses in *seven years*, than ever occurred in any *twenty years* since the creation! And how much less prosperous would this country have been, at this instant, had *Messieurs Pitt and Palmer* rated the speed of our *mail-coaches* at one mile an hour less? Nor is the evil wholly confined to the *mail-coaches*:—all *telegraphs*, *balloons*, *expeditions*, and *highflyers*, are compelled to increase their speed proportionally: or, *John Bull*, who is too intensely occupied on matters going forward in trade, or on change, to feel for the poor animals which are straining every nerve to drag them to the end of the stage, a quarter of an hour sooner than Bountiful Nature ever intended, would threaten to *walk*, rather than be dragged along the road in a

waggon!—But hence with all sympathy for poor, tortured, tearless, horses! and come we to woes—to sighs—to tears—of *greater far than great!*—of gods! goddesses! heroes! and heroines!

Entering a little village on the border of the little county of Huntingdon, one of the horses lost a shoe; and the *lads* stopped the carriage that they might pick it up.

"What is the matter?" said Eliza, looking out to see the cause of the sudden stoppage.—"Only one of the horses *ha*
"lost a shoe, *an* please you my lady;
"that's all."

"A shoe!" cried Lady Harriett—"then
"the poor beast will not be able to travel
"farther."

"O yes, he can, my lady! It *an't* "more *nor* three miles; so it won't hurt "him—much."

"Not hurt him much!" said Eliza—"If it will hurt him at all, that will be "*too* much, I think.—Is there no farrier's "shop in this village?"

"Yes, my lady—there's one not much "more than forty yards from this very "place."

"Is there any tolerable inn in the vil-"lage, where we could alight?"—said Lady Harriett.

"Yes; a *bit* of one, my lady—but "they be very clean, good sort of people."

"Indeed! Then let the shoe be put on "here; and drive up to the door."

The carriage was driven to the door accordingly. Her ladyship gave a liberal fee to the lads: telling them to get the shoe put on, and go gently home, as the poor creatures seemed very warm, notwithstanding they came so moderate a pace!

On entering a very neat and commodious parlour, the ladies perceived a cloth laid, apparently for six persons; and were informed, by the female servant who conducted them in, that a party of young gentlemen-farmers had appointed to dine at four o'clock; and go to the play in the evening:—but that, in consequence of a *bull-baiting*, about sixteen miles off, all the world was going there; so that they had altered their minds, and just sent a letter to say they'd dine the next play day.

"The dinner must be nearly ready," said her ladyship—"it smells well. What "is it?"

"A boiled breast of veal, my lady, two "very fine ducks, and an apple-pie. And "'twill be all ready, I believe, in little "more than a quarter of an hour."

"Oh! 'tis much too good a dinner for "*bull-baiters!* Bring it in as soon as it "is ready; for I have not experienced "such an appetite a long time.—And do "tell the footman to look out, and not "let the coachman pass by. He cannot "be far distant; and we will take our own "horses to the next stage town."

There was a large closet on one side of the fire-place, in which a cat was crying. Eliza readily concluding that the creature pined for liberty, let it out; and was going

to close the door; when the attention of both ladies was attracted by the conversation of several men in a room adjoining; which, from their language, they had no doubt, were players. Therefore, curious to hear the eloquence of those gentlemen, when off the stage, they left the door open, and sat down as near to it as convenient; determined to hear what was said; and flattering themselves that they should be instructed.

"This is the eighth company that I "have been in within a twelvemonth," said a pleasing young voice—"yet not "one of the managers can challenge me "with owing him so much as a single "dollar!—What do you think of that, "Sir?"

"And for the best reason in the world,

"no doubt, Mr. Holman. Northern "managers are not in the habit of giving "so much credit to any—but *stars*," said a voice, which seemed to have delivered its opinion in a kind of magisterial tone.

"Well said, manager!" cried a voice in a loud counter-tenor tone.—"You all "agree in that respect, if you differ in "every thing else. Strict economy, and "no trust, is the motto in all the *green-* "*rooms* North of St. Giles's, I believe."

"Let every *mon* speak freely and fairly "o'the *breedge* that carrieth him *weel* "over"—said a voice in a tolerably broad Scotch dialect.—"*Sith* the *neeght* that I "enacted *Hamleet*, at Bawtry, the ma- "nager *himsel* put a dollar into my hand, "and begged me to *seet* off for London "immeediately; as they wanted just *sic* "a person as *mysel*, to *feel* up all the

"principal chareecters in the metropo-
"lis."

"There is no rule without an exception, "certainly," said a voice, somewhat hoarse —"Our manager, though I speak it in "his presence, has had his generous mo- "ments to my knowledge; and, had *he* "a *dollar* to spare, on the night you per- "formed it here, he, most probably, "would have done so, too."

"The *deel taak* the *green* from your "mouths, geentlemon!" replied the voice in broad Scotch—"*An* you mean any "refleection on my performance of the "chareecter, I shall *leet* you all know, "that I can reseent an insult of *sic* a "keend as soon as any other geentle- "mon."

Manager.—Poh! Poh! Don't mind

" what any of them say. There is not so
" much real theatrical merit, in all of them
" put together, as, if fairly valued, would
" purchase a farthing rush-light. If it
" were not for my own family, we should
" be in a fine *hobble* to get through any
" piece at all!"

Young voice—a little angry.—" And I'll
" vouch for your family being no great
" things, Mr. Manager. As for yourself,
" you are as *stiff* and *methodical* as *J—k*
" *K——le!* Your wife is as *vapid* and
" *uninteresting* as *Mrs. S——ns!* and
" your tall stick of a daughter has all the
" *imperfections* of *Mrs. E—n!* without
" the advantage of being little!"

Counter-tenor.—" Ha, ha, ha! I like
" to hear *Bannister* attempt to criticise;
" who, every body knows, is as *flat* as

"his namesake! and as unmeaning as
"*Fa—tt* or *Mu—n!*"

Hoarse voice.—"D—— it, don't you
"pretend to find fault, *Mr. Quick;* for
"you are more stupid than your name-
"sake ever was!—With the additional
"*faults* of being as much *out of Nature's*
"*way* as *E—y* or *Kn—ht!* and as *noisy*
"and *inharmonious* as *Inc—n!*"

Manager.—"Holloa, *Mr. Brereton!*
"What, do you throw off, too! who,
"every body knows to be as *inanimate* as
"*J—es*, to *mouthe* as bad as ——, and
"*mum* broader by half than ——"

Dinner making its appearance, introduced by the female waiter, the ladies drew away from the closet; and her ladyship, pointing to a play-bill which was pinned up over the fire-place, said—"By

"the names of your performers you have "an excellent company here."

"Very good, indeed, my lady!—Very "good, indeed! for such a little place. "Though they had a sad loss in *Mr.* "*Garrick* leaving them last week. Indeed "they ha'n't played since."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Eliza, secreting a smile with her handkerchief—"How "came Mr. *Garrick* to leave the com-"pany before the conclusion of the sea-"son?"

"Why, *an* please your ladyship, there "happened a bit of a squabble between "*Mr. Garrick* and the *smith's* son, about "shoeing a horse—for *Mr. Garrick* had "served four years to the trade himself. "So the *smith's* son made up a party to "damn him.—God protect us!—So they

"all met, in this very room—there was "*Tom Sledge*, the *smith's* son; and *William Spunge*, the *baker's* apprentice; "and *Jack Snuffle*, the *clerk's* son; and "*Sam Stickwell*, the *butcher's* young "man; and that saucy *blackguard*, the "*parson's* young footman; who all came "to proper resolutions, that they could "kick up a *row* as well as any of their old "companions in London."

"Surely you must be mistaken, Sally, "as to the parson's footman," said Lady Harriett—"for, certainly, no clergyman "would suffer his servant to act so illegally "and scandalously."

"He! the parson! Lord, my lady! "Why, I don't believe but what the "*parson* was at the bottom of all; for "*Miss Frill*, the millener's 'prentice, had "walked out with *Mr. Garrick* but the "very Sunday before; and wouldn't take

"a band-box to the parsonage the next
"night, as usual; for all she was sent
"for! So, they do say, that he hissed, as
"well as the rest of the precious party;
"though he contrived to put his hand
"before his mouth, that nobody might
"see him do it.—A pretty deal of differ-
"ence, indeed, between *he* and the good
"curate! who, though he *have* got a wife
"and four small children, with only forty
"guineas a-year, is the peace-maker and
"friend of every body. However, be
"that as it may, ladies, they all con-
"trived to kick up an O. P. dance in the
"play-house, till *Mr. Garrick* should
"make an apology. But the gentleman
"was obstinate, and rather than sacrifice
"his honour to such a rabble; as he said
"in this very parlour; he preferred leaving
"so fine a situation, and took leave of the
"company. God bless him! he was a
"charming man—and *Miss Frill* went

"away with him. They are to be mar-
"ried at the next town; and she is to
"play *Juliet*, about nine miles off. So
"the O. P. business is all over now, my
"lady—they settled it with the manager
"over a bowl of punch, the day before
"yesterday; and have bespoke the play
"for to-night. So the players all expect
"a great house; and are smoaking their
"pipes in the little room on the other
"side o'that there closet all the while I
"am talking; as they come here every
"afternoon."

"Humph! Well! Set the cheese and
"the wine on the table, and you need not
"wait, Sally.—Do, my dear Eliza, pull
"open the closet-door.—I hear a female
"voice."

"Sit down; sit down, *Mrs. Howman!*"

said the manager—" Don't give way to " passion."

" Passion!" exclaimed the female voice —" 'Tis enough to make any one go into " a passion.—Sdeath and fire!—To think " that he should sit here, smoking his " pipe, with a whole pint of ale before him, " when he knows, that we had only a " four-penny loaf, a pig's kidney, and a " pound of potatoes, to live on for the " last four days!"

" Zounds, *Holman!* why, you live like " an *alderman!*" said the hoarse voice.— " A pig's kidney! What a luxury! Why, " I have carried a *half-penny roll* more " than half-a-mile, for the last three days, " purely for the satisfaction of enjoying " *turnip-sauce* with it, gratis. O fie! " you should study economy, my boy; " and learn to live frugally."

"Live frugally!" repeated *Mrs. Holman*—"if we don't get somewhat of a "house to-night we sha'n't be able to live "at all, I am afraid—except it be the "manager; and he takes care to grow fat "let who will starve.—There's the baker, "*Mr. Holman*, has refused to let me have "your clean *half-shirt* back, in exchange "for my brown gown—so your *Othello's* "linen, Mr. Manager, will look nearly as "black as his skin."

"Never mind! Never mind, *Mrs.* "*Holman!* Sit down, and take a glass of "ale with me; as I see your husband's "pint is nearly out. Make yourself easy, "madam, about his half-shirt; when he "is dressing for the play, you must rub "the *collar* and *frill* of the shirt he has "on, with *whiting*; and that will do "tolerably well—on an emergency."

"I am sure," said the hoarse voice—"if they expect to see me play *Iago* in a "clean *half-shirt*, or in any shirt at all, "they will be most confoundedly mis-"taken! I have worn my neck-cloth, on "the same side outwards, for the last five "days, that I might, to night, have an "opportunity of shewing clean linen to "my audience, by turning it."

"I am astonished!" exclaimed Lady Harriett—"I could not have conceived "the monstrous impulse of theatrical fas-"cination, had I not been actually an ear-"witness of it! Do shut the door, my "love; for I think we have heard quite "enough on the subject. One would "hardly deem it credible, that men, who, "from their conversation, do not seem "destitute of the acquirements of common "sense, however much they may outrage

"her favours, by so strangely attributing "their own peculiar defects to performers "of the highest rank, to whom the severest "criticism could never allot a tittle of the "portion placed to the credit of either!— "One would absolutely think it impossible, that such men, who might have "become useful members of society, if "properly employed, should wildly forfeit "all claim to the regard of their friends, "by quitting stations more adapted to "their capacities, to live three days on a "pig's kidney! or walk half-a-mile to "procure a raw turnip as sauce to a half-penny roll! merely that they may figure "away as kings, princes, and heroes, in "a country-barn! and, while pinched "with hunger, shivering from cold, and "restless from the want of linen, enjoy "the ideal transport of soon seeing their "wondrous talents claim a hundred-fold

"applause from the rapturous audiences of "London Theatres!"

"Poor wretches!" cried Eliza—"I am "sure they have made my heart bleed for "them. Suppose, my dear Lady Har-"riett, we were to do somewhat for them, "and go to the play? I dare say we shall "have a good bed here; and may, pos-"sibly, be really entertained."

"With all my heart, my dear; for, I "protest, if I had heard of their distresses "before dinner, such a relation would "have deprived me of my appetite.—Oh! "If the manager be in the house, Sally, "do ask him if he can accommodate us "with two decent places in his theatre "this evening, and, if he can, you may "bring me five tickets—but bring them "yourself, Sally, as I would not wish to "trouble him."

Sally soon returned with five tickets; not very clean, indeed; and a smiling countenance—assuring the ladies, that the manager would take care to secure the best places in all the play-house, for their *honours* accommodation.

"Give the gentleman this five-pound "note, Sally;—but, tell him, I mean it "to be appropriated to the benefit of the "company, the same as money taken at "the door.—The poor girl seems pleased "with her commission—let us hear what "she says."

"There! There!" cried the girl— "There's what you don't get every day, "nor from every lady, *Mr. Henderson.* "God bless them for their goodness, I "say!—There's a five-pound note for you! "But the ladies bid me say as how 'tis for

"the benefit of all; the same as money "taken at the door."

The company, all of them, were, for some time, too eagerly contemplating the appearance of so lovely a stranger, to interrupt Sally by a single exclamation of gratitude. It is a matter of doubt, indeed, which were most distended—their eyes, or their mouths! At length they recovered their speech, nearly as follows—

Mr. Holman.—"Gentlemen! Gentle-"men! I beg leave to move, that we call "for a crown bowl of punch; in order to "drink to the health and happiness of the "noble ladies who have sent us so inesti-"mable a present."

Mr. Brereton.—"I take leave to second "the gentleman's motion, with all my "heart."

The Scotch gentleman.—" Could I be " certain that the dreenking one bowl " would be deèmed suffeeciently satisfac- " tory, I would reedily accede to your " motion, geentlemen; but, *sith* one may " geenerate an inclination for another; " and as some of us (though I am not so " happily setuated) have wives and fami- " lies, which may bless us for our modee- " ration, I vote for going to the theeatre " as we are; and having an extraordenary " pint of ale when the business is all " over."

" To the vote! To the vote! To the " vote!" was the general cry.

" I am sorry that I stand alone, geen- " tlemen, in my economical motion; but " the punch must come forth, Sally, so " be as breesk as you can, *lassie*."

"The generous ladies!"—"A bumper "of a house!"—"Crammed benefits," &c. &c. soon went round; and, in a quarter of an hour, another bowl was voted; and, then, a third—when the manager happening to drop the tobacco out of his half-smoked pipe, into one of the gentlemen's shoes, an altercation ensued, which betokened serious symptoms of a quarrel. The bowl and glasses jingled and crashed.—*Mrs. Holman,* who had for some time only *hiccuped,* screamed most alarmingly; and blows passed loudly, and in no small numbers.

"Amazing!" exclaimed her ladyship. "Do ring the bell, my love. That we, "so soon, should find rational beings re-"duce themselves to a state unworthy the "attention of the humane!—What is "that dreadful noise about, Sally?"

"O ladies! The *players* have been "drinking your healths so often in punch, "which, God hely '*em*, they seldom know "the taste of, that they are quarrelling, "and have broken a bowl worth a guinea, "and all the glasses! And there is n't one "among '*em* but what *ha* got a *black-eye* "or a *bloody-nose!* Poor fellows! How "sorry I am!"

"Heavens! The riot is really terrify-"ing!" said Eliza, much alarmed.

"Do, Sally, tell the coachman to bring "the carriage to the door, directly; and "let me have the bill.—Terrifying, in-"deed! We have stopped to some pur-"pose!"

CHAPTER XVII.

CAN THOSE WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO INSTIL CHARITY INTO THE HEARTS OF OTHERS, EVER BE DESTITUTE OF THAT PRECIOUS ATTRIBUTE THEMSELVES!

"THANK God! We have safely escaped "the noise of those terrible players!" said Eliza, as soon as their carriage had quitted the village.—"Yet, upon my honour! I "pity, more than I blame, them. Their "poor stomachs, destitute of proper nou-"rishment, could not retain the noxious "effluvia of the potent liquor; which, "rushing to the head, they must have

"become intoxicated before they sus-"pected it to be possible for them to be "slightly affected. Poor men! I am "fearful that they will not be able to per-"form their bespoken play. And, by "the time the guinea-bowl, and the glasses, "with the punch, are all paid for, and "the tables and chairs which have been "damaged, are repaired, there will be "but a small portion of the five-pound "note remaining, I am apprehensive."

"I am of your opinion, Eliza. We "should have laid out our money to more "advantage, I am inclined to believe, had "we sent it to the amiable curate; who, "most probably, large as his family is, "would not have expended the whole at "home."

"The young woman's character of that "good man, though in so few words,

"gave me a very high opinion of his patri-
"archal charity and benevolence. What
"an infinity of good may such a man
"communicate to the whole circle of his
"parishioners, if he be heartily inclined
"to inculcate those divine precepts which
"his *Master* taught him! A trifle cannot
"be thrown away by transmitting it,
"secretly, to such a man, I think."

"Certainly not, my dear; and we will
"make the attempt at our next inn."

The Reverend Curate of ——, in whose favour our ladies had so amiably resolved, was full as good a Christian and pastor, as Sally had reported him. He had, unfortunately, fallen under the *ban* of his *vicar*, for having presumed to censure the uncharitable proceedings of the despicable *junto* of O. P.'s; and had, in consequence of

daring *to do as he would be done unto*, that very morning, at a moment's notice, been dismissed from his curacy! and left, with an infirm wife, and four young children, to revel in luxury, on the capital sum of *thirty shillings!* being the salary due to him for the last fortnight's *cure of souls*—and to seek another situation, cooped up in a country village, more than sixty miles from London! With that little treasure, too, all he possessed in the world, he had nearly *two pounds* to pay for two months rent; and more than *twenty shillings* to the butcher, baker, and cheesemonger; who, having been duly informed of their curate's dismissal, by the vicar's saucy, officious servant, had already become not a little clamorous for their money; though, confident that they would be paid their demands twenty times over, did they proclaim them in the village:—but, that they dared not do, lest

the vicar should hear of it, and not only deprive them of his custom, but be as troublesome as possible in matters relative to his situation.

The *hovel* of the worthy man, had, for just twelve hours, been the house of woe. The wife had increased her indisposition by weeping and wailing! The children had cried themselves to sleep, because their mama had cried too, and told them that they would all be turned into the street, and starved! And the benevolent man, who *could not dig, and to beg was ashamed,* was sitting—" like patience on " a monument, smiling at grief;" having for the fiftieth time, surveyed his *mighty* hoard of *treasure* :—still at a loss how to pay it, or whom to pay it to, without being reviled by some of the disappointed; and had just ejaculated, with hands and eyes uplifted—" The Lord giveth, and

"the Lord taketh away; blessed be the "name of the Lord!" when Sally knocked rather hastily, and roused his expectation of reiterated and rude demands.

"'Tis very late, Sir," said the humane girl, on the benevolent clergyman opening the door—"but, as I happened to clap "my eye upon this *here* letter, in our "packet, by to-night's post, and could "almost venture to take an oath that the "*seal* is just the same as the *court* of "arms was, upon the great ladies coach, "that stopped at our house and *dined*; "and then went forwards, though they "had ordered places for the play, and "gave five pounds for as many tickets, to "our poor drunken players; why, I "thought, mayhap, it *mout* be of conse- "quence to you, Sir; and so *run* up "with it. It is paid for—so good night, "Sir."

The Curate blessed the considerate girl for her kind attention to him, though she had run away as fast as she was able. He looked at the superscription—examined the seal—turned the letter round and round—and over and over: at last, he cut round the wax, and, opening the letter, perused—" Reverend Sir, I am afraid we " laid out some money to-day, in your " village, to very little advantage. Fame " assures us, that, had it been deposited " in your hands, it might have yielded " more. We, most certainly, were a little " vexed, Sir, because we did not like to " be immediately convinced of having ac- " tually thrown that money away, which, " properly placed, might have proved ser- " viceable; therefore, to elude a similar " error, by no more listening to similar " tales, we are resolved, during the re- " mainder of our journey, to be satisfied " with the conversation of each other;

"and that we may, in some measure, "atone for such error, we confidently "trust, that we cannot do better than "devote the enclosed little superfluity to "the service of you and your family.— "May the Almighty, in due time, in-"crease your store a thousand fold!—as "well for the benefit of your neighbours "as yourself. The less you inquire about "the persons who sent you this, the more "you will oblige two sincere admirers of "your warmly reported Christian virtues.

"H. L.—E. O'M."

The reverend *curate* looked about him; again perused the letter, and wondered that its contents—so flattering and humane—should not be verified.—He laid it down on the table—cast his eyes towards heaven—then at the paper. The folds had opeued a little—he took it up by one leaf only—it opened more, and a ten-pound

note dropped from it!—He groaned with delight—fell on his knees, and piously exclaimed—" O God! Thou *fed* the famishing children of Israel with manna! "Thou fed Elija by ravens! And now, "almost as miraculously, by this precious "gift, have Thou fed the humblest of thy "servants, with his wife and babes!— "Blessed be thy holy name for ever!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Error.—Vol. III. p. 32, line 3, for *Jacob* read *Michael*.

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